

UNIVERSITY OF  
**NORTH ALABAMA**  
MAGAZINE



**FOR ALUMNI AND  
FRIENDS OF UNA**  
SPRING 2017 • VOLUME 25  
NUMBER 1

# UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA MAGAZINE

## COVER STORY

**4** Division I

## FEATURES

**12** Homecoming Awards 2016

**22** For the Anderson Family, Philanthropy Equals Happiness

**28** UNA Bridges Gaps with GIS and Caring

**34** Harrison and Lions are True Student Athletes

## OF NOTE

**2** President's Message

**8** Around Campus

**26** A Letter from Robert Steele

**31** Athletics

**36** Alumni President's Message

**38** Haley Brink New Alumni Relations Director

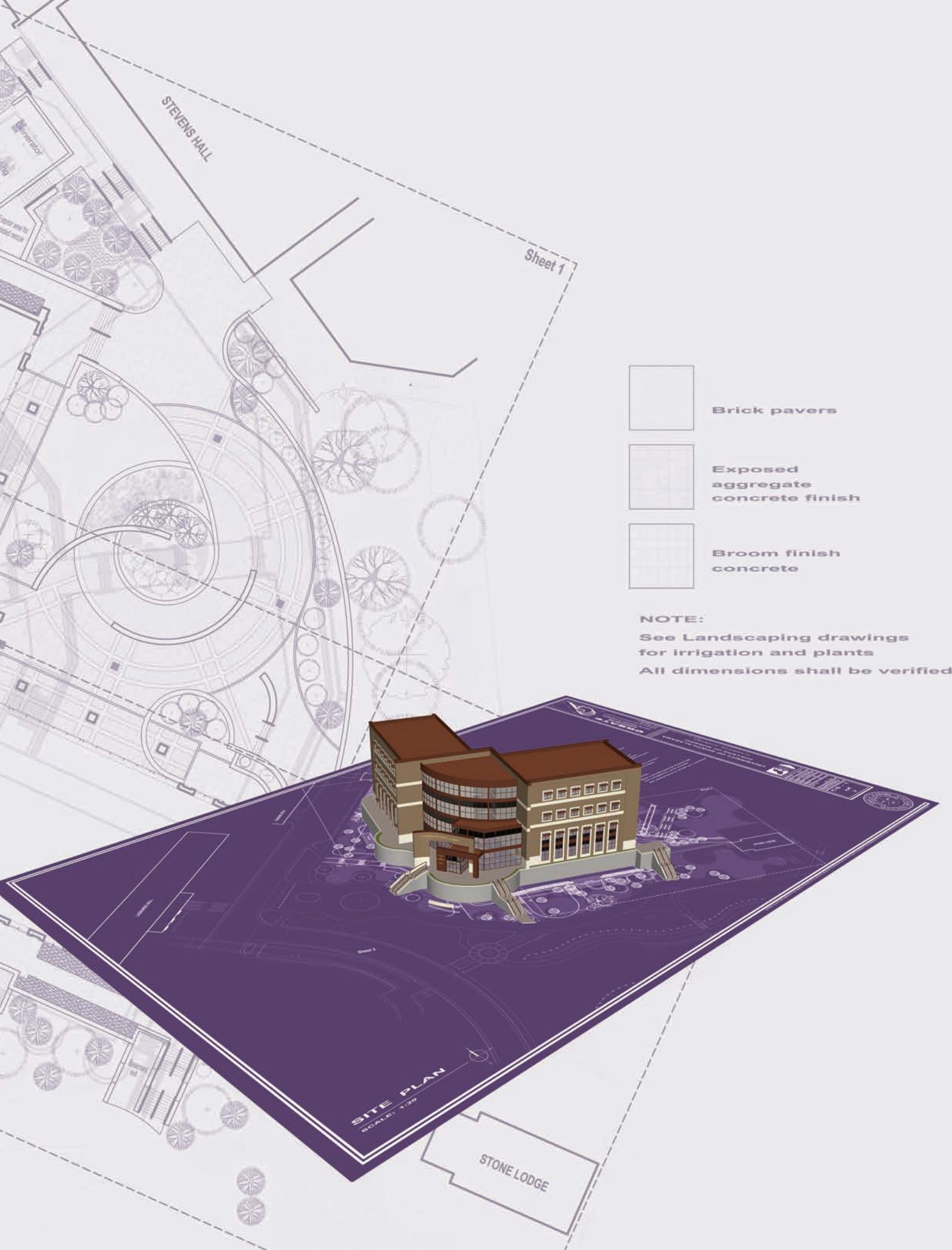
**40** Class Notes

**44** In Memory



**FOR ALUMNI AND  
FRIENDS OF UNA**  
SPRING 2017 • VOLUME 25  
NUMBER 1





# UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA

SPRING 2017 • VOLUME 25 • No. 1 • FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF UNA

## MAGAZINE

### ADMINISTRATION

*President*  
Kenneth D. Kitts

*Vice President for Academic Affairs/Provost*  
John Thornell

*Interim Vice President for  
Business and Financial Affairs*  
Evan Thornton '15

*Vice President for Student Affairs*  
David Shields

*Vice President for University Advancement*  
Deborah L. Shaw '82

### STAFF

*PUBLISHER*  
Deborah L. Shaw '82

*EDITOR*  
Bryan Rachal

*COPY EDITOR*  
B.J. Wilson '80

*CREATIVE DIRECTOR*  
Karen Hodges '84

*GRAPHIC DESIGNER*  
Chuck Craig '79

*UNIVERSITY PHOTOGRAPHER*  
Shannon Wells '05

*CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS*  
Amy Bishop '06

Taranae Cooley

Emily Jones

Joseph Romans Photography

*FEATURE WRITERS*

Shane Herman '99

Jeff Hodges '82

B.J. Keeton '09

Bryan Rachal

B.J. Wilson '80

*CONTRIBUTING WRITERS*

Amy Bishop '06

Bella Martinez

**QUESTIONS OR INQUIRIES:**  
256-765-4225 or brachal@una.edu

**ADDRESS CHANGES AND ALUMNI UPDATES:**  
256-765-4201 or alumni1@una.edu

### STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

It is the policy of the University of North Alabama to afford equal opportunities in education and in employment to qualified persons regardless of age, color, creed, disability, national origin, race, religion, or sex in accordance with all applicable federal and state constitutions, laws, and valid regulations. The coordinator for nondiscrimination policies for students is the Title IX Coordinator, Guillot University Center, or 256-765-4223. The coordinator for employees is the Assistant Vice President for Human Resources and Affirmative Action, Bibb Graves Hall, or telephone 256-765-4291 or email: [humanresources@una.edu](mailto:humanresources@una.edu).

*Information contained herein is as it currently exists but  
is subject to change without prior notice.*



Kenneth D. Kitts

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## Kenneth D. Kitts

of the season, legendary coach Bobby Wallace announced his retirement. Coach Wallace's impressive career at UNA led him to 126 wins and four National Championship appearances, making him the winningest coach in UNA and Gulf South Conference history. After 15 years on the UNA coaching staff, Chris Willis has stepped into the position of head coach. I am confident that Coach Willis will carry on our tradition of graduating champions.

In December, we announced that our athletics program will be transitioning to Division I. UNA will continue as a member of Division II and the Gulf South Conference for one more year. In 2018, thirteen sports will become a member of the Atlantic Sun Conference. Football will move into the Big South conference and will begin conference play in 2019. I encourage you to read the full article about DI in this edition of *University of North Alabama Magazine* to learn more about how the DI transition will benefit the university as a whole.

On the academic front, we continue to see substantial growth and progress. UNA recently entered into a partnership with NASA that will initially include the College of Business and the College of Arts and Sciences, and will focus on attracting high-quality undergraduate students majoring in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, management, marketing, and entrepreneurship disciplines. The College of Arts and Sciences is now offering its second graduate degree in English, an M.A. in Writing. And we continue to be proud of our growing list of program accreditations—these accreditations are labor-intensive undertakings and

Dear Lions,

Welcome to the Spring 2017 *University of North Alabama Magazine*. Spring has arrived at UNA, and with it comes a season-long flurry of campus activity. Exciting annual programs such as the Miss UNA pageant, Step Sing, and Light the Fountain fill our calendars. A host of conferences, performances, and preview days keep crowd levels high. And the spring athletic teams are working toward another successful season.

The recent months have been eventful ones at UNA. In the fall of 2016, our official student headcount was 7,492 students, the largest total enrollment in the school's 186-year history and a 5.8 percent increase over the previous year. UNA's freshmen cohort also broke records. This fall we welcomed 1,177 new freshman students, a 1.6 percent increase over fall 2015's cohort number and a 26.4 percent increase over fall 2014. Our spring headcount also represents an enrollment record.

Our football team earned their fourth consecutive GSC Championship and a berth in the DII National Championship in Kansas City, Kansas. The leadership and persistence of this team made the Lion Nation proud. At the conclusion



underscore our faculty's commitment to academic excellence.

Our Human Environmental Sciences Department has both a new home and a new name. The department has moved to the former Keystone building in downtown Florence, and will now be known as the Connie D. McKinney Department of Human Sciences, Hospitality, and Design. This naming was made possible by brothers Chester and Joe McKinney in honor of their late mother, a 1950 alumna. The addition of 400 parking spots to campus off of Circular Drive is nearly complete. Demolition of Floyd Hall is slated to begin in late spring. Once the demolition is complete, construction will begin on Laura M. Harrison Hall, which will house the Anderson College of Nursing.

We're still hard at work on our comprehensive campaign. "Build the Pride" continues to see much success, and we're so thankful for the generosity we've experienced. For additional information, take a few moments to read Dr. Deborah Shaw's campaign update. Please remember that you can always visit [una.edu/campaign](http://una.edu/campaign) to pledge your support.

It is truly a time to "Rise and Roar" at UNA. I hope that you will come see for yourself the impressive things that are happening on your university campus.

I'm also excited to share with you that in the next edition of the *University of North Alabama Magazine*, we'll feature a recently completed economic study that shows UNA has an economic impact in excess of \$300 million!

Roar Lions!  
Ken Kitts

## CAMPAIGN UPDATE FROM THE VP FOR ADVANCEMENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE UNA FOUNDATION



*Dr. Deborah Shaw '82*

Fantastic progress is being made toward our campaign goal of \$35 million! We are currently at \$30 million, and need everyone's help if we are going to reach 100% of our target. Please, will you consider giving? We need your support to make UNA one of the top regional universities in the Southeast. Join the thousands who give annually, we who give because we believe.

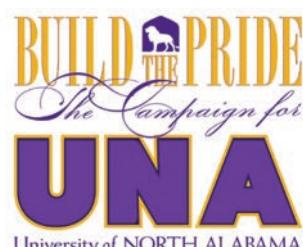
We believe we have the best faculty and staff, the best programs, the best students, the best alumni, the best friends of the university, and that we are in the best area — The Shoals. At a time of continued decreased state funding, we must rely on private donations to not only operate, but to excel. And we believe we can reach our highest potential with your help.

One group who is extremely committed to the success of our University is our new 2016-17 UNA Foundation officers. Harry Smith '64 is our new Chair. Originally from Florence, Harry has lived in the Memphis area for more than 35 years, and is a retired businessman who is active with numerous charitable organizations. Vice-Chair is Jeff Johnson '85, who is a resident of Florence and is the Owner/President of Elliott & Associates Insurance. Foundation Treasurer is David Sunseri '98, who is the Vice President of Product Development at Berg, LLC, in Nashville, Tennessee. I round out the officers as

Secretary, and along with an active board of volunteer directors we all believe we can help lead UNA to new levels of greatness.

But we can't do it alone. Please remember what your college experience meant to you — how it prepared you for a career, how you developed friendships you still have to this day, how it helped you understand the world is a bigger place than your hometown. We all owe a debt of gratitude to our alma mater. Please consider giving to our campaign ([una.edu/campaign](http://una.edu/campaign)).

Roar Lions!  
**Debbie Shaw '82**



# Division I

*"The move to Division I will help sustain enrollment, expand our fan base, and bring much-needed visibility for this wonderful institution."*

– Ken Kitts, President

It's a Monday afternoon in February 2017. University of North Alabama Director of Athletics Mark Linder is in his office and a lot is on his plate.

With the athletic department's impending move to NCAA Division I status, several changes are expected to be made in the next five years. Renovations are being planned for Flowers Hall, home of the Lions volleyball, men's, and women's basketball programs. Questions

still surround UNA's future with Braly Stadium, home of the football program. An addition to the athletics staff with academic experience at the Division I level will also soon be sought.

While preparations are being made for the move, however, several UNA teams still have their full attention and focus on Gulf South Conference races and competing at the Division II level. The men's and women's basketball teams





each qualified for the GSC Tournament. Spring sports have also begun, including the Lions' NCAA Division II defending national champion softball program. UNA baseball and men's and women's tennis are off to hot starts as well.

In short, the UNA athletic department is living in two worlds at the same time...a balancing act that is not always easy.

"From one point of view, we have one foot in Division II and one foot in Division I," said Linder, who has remained in constant contact with administrators from the Division I conferences UNA is set to join, but is also committed to exiting Division II and the GSC with grace and dignity. "Our focus right now is to have our coaches in a position

to continue to compete for GSC and Division II championships. For the next 14 months, our sole focus will be to continue to be a solid member of the GSC and to try to represent it well at the highest level."

North Alabama will remain a full-fledged member of the GSC and Division II throughout the 2017-18 athletic seasons. After that, it will begin a four-year transition period before joining Division I. The Lions will become members of the ASUN in all sports but football. On the gridiron, UNA will become an FCS member of the Big South Conference.

"Fans will start to see some announcements of UNA renewing some traditional rivalries that we once



Ted Gumbart, ASUN Commissioner





*"As we move forward, we are going to see our campus and our community transform before our eyes with this move and we would like to have everyone join us and get involved with it."*

– Mark Linder, UNA Athletics Director

had," said Linder. "There is a fan base that remembers the kind of atmosphere we had in the 1970s and 80s that was generated by those types of rivalries. Those fans will be able to connect a little more with playing against these schools, such as Alabama A&M, Jacksonville State, and Troy. Our hope would also be to secure an FBC opponent for football within the next 4-6 years."

Flash forward to present day, where staff and administrators are already hard at work spreading the good news about the move, the benefits for fans, and the talk of new contracts with Adidas, etc...

But there's also talk about how UNA plans to get the word out to not only prospective fans and athletes, but also to prospective students.

At the heart, the transition to Division I is less about athletics than it is about institutional identity. An increased brand awareness of UNA would only help to benefit the Shoals region, and significantly at that. A recent feasibility study showed that an increase of 100 students translates into a \$3.8 million impact on the local economy. Ready for the kicker? The average enrollment increase for schools moving to Division



Mark Linder, UNA Athletics Director, and Steve Pierce, UNA Board of Trustees

# DIVISION II

I FCS is 13 percent, which would boost enrollment at UNA by almost 1,000 students. An additional thousand students would add approximately \$38 million per year to the local economy.

There is no denying that we live in a sports-centered culture and the opportunity for increased exposure that brings certainly won't hurt, as mentioned by UNA President Ken Kitts during the recent press conference.

"This is an exciting time for Lion athletics, the University as a whole, and the communities we serve," said Kitts. "The move to Division I will help sustain enrollment, expand our fan base, and bring much-needed visibility for this wonderful institution. We're determined to spread the word about the amazing things we have going on at UNA, so if prospective students learn about us from a sports ticker, great!" Kitts said.

Part of that exposure will come in the form of a constant presence on ESPN3. The league uses the ESPN3 format to broadcast all games. The company, however, has specific qualifications for a gymnasium to meet in order to allow an official broadcast. Because of this, the 45-year old building will need upgrades to become compliant with the ASUN's contract with ESPN.

Linder added that fans will also notice the hiring of additional staff members within the athletic department to assist with the transition. "Administratively, we need to make sure we take care of our academic and compliance programs," he said. "We are beginning to look at hiring individuals with Division I experience in those two areas. The NCAA Academic Progress Rate (APR) kind of drives the boat in Division I, so we need to make sure we are putting resources into making sure we are successful academically."

With all of the expected changes coming to the world of UNA athletics, Linder and the rest of the department have come up with a slogan that sums up the goals and expectations that fans have witnessed over the course of UNA's storied tradition:

Rise and Roar.

"The term 'Rise and Roar' kind of captured our hearts," said Linder. "We are rising from Division II to Division I and it's about the increase of expectations and the increase in the commitment to excellence. That is where the 'Rise' came from. When Dr. Kitts first came to UNA, he said it was our time to Roar. There are a lot of great things going on at the University of North Alabama in academics and athletics and we need to tell our story better. As we make this transition, bring more branding power to the university, and enrollment increases, you will really begin to see UNA rise and roar."

Linder added, "We think the transition to DI will add value to the student experience here and will also add value to the degree they earn when they graduate. As we move forward, we are going to see our campus and our community transform before our eyes with this move and we would like to have everyone join us and get involved with it."

Or better yet, everyone should RISE and ROAR!

# RISE AND ROAR

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA



## University Awards Honorary Degree for Music Icon

# Rick Hall

Officials with the University of North Alabama awarded music icon Rick Hall with an honorary doctorate degree from UNA. Hall is a legendary music producer known for founding FAME studios; he's also credited as the founder of the modern day "Muscle Shoals Sound."

The announcement was made earlier in the year during a reception at Rogers Hall on UNA's campus as part of a kickoff event for the UNA Theatre production "I'll Take You There: The Music of Muscle Shoals," an original work that featured the musical heritage of the Shoals. The VIP reception before the play was hosted by UNA in conjunction with the UNA College of Arts and Sciences, the Hamada family, and UNA Theatre.

UNA President Ken Kitts was on hand to announce Hall's honor and noted that Hall has strong ties to UNA. "Very literally, Rick's legacy has been part of the university in the form of his sons, Rick, Mark and Rodney, who are UNA alumni," Kitts said.

Kitts went on to list many of Hall's accomplishments, including his designation as Billboard's Producer of the Year for the World, his Grammy Trustees award and his publishing

catalog that includes some of the greatest songs of our time. Kitts said Hall has had a profound impact on UNA as well.

"Rick has been of significant assistance to the UNA Department of Entertainment Industry as we strive to instill that same love of music in future generations," Kitts said. "With that in mind, the university's Executive Council entered conversations about how best to honor an individual who has given so much to our region. As a result of those conversations, the Executive Council nominated Rick Hall to receive an honorary doctoral degree from the University of North Alabama," he said.

Hall was very appreciative of his award, which was conferred at UNA's December 2016 commencement ceremonies.



Mr. J. Walt Aldridge, Ms. Janna L. Malone, Mr. Rick Hall, Dr. Robert A. Garfrerick, and Mr. Peter Guralnick



# UNA ROTC

## Named "Top Program" 2016, While UNA Labeled Gold Level School for Military Friendliness

The University of North Alabama's Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) program is the best of the best according to the 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade, United States Army Cadet Command! UNA Army ROTC was awarded the "Top Program" award for 2016 in the medium category of schools, which includes military schools that commission between 15 and 18 Second Lieutenants per fiscal year.

Col. Nelson Kraft, commander of the 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade, United States Army Cadet Command, presented UNA with the award, which is given to the best Army ROTC program in the Brigade as determined by the Brigade Command team. The award is based on measurable, objective criteria that include physical, academic, leadership, and efficiency categories.

"The success of this program is directly related to the amount of positive energy, effort and commitment of our student cadets and amazing staff," said Lt. Col. W. Cochran Pruett, professor of Military Science at UNA. "That energy, effort and commitment has been significantly reinforced by the tireless support given by this great University team. I am truly proud to be a small part of this outstanding group of leaders," he said.



All Army ROTC programs throughout the southeast U.S. compete for the "Top Program" award. The 6<sup>th</sup> Brigade consists of approximately 30 programs in the medium category in states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and Puerto Rico.

UNA was also recently awarded the No. 1 designation for Military Friendly Schools in the public universities with 10,000 students or fewer category.

UNA was ranked in six categories: academic policies and compliance; admissions and orientation; culture and commitment; financial aid and assistance; graduation and career; and military student support and retention. UNA scored the highest in the culture and commitment category, followed closely by the financial aid and assistance category.

UNA President Ken Kitts said this was one of his goals when he arrived at the University.

"We honor military service and want to support those who have served," said Kitts. "We've worked hard in both Student Affairs and our Office of Military and Veteran Affairs to make education more accessible to service members and veterans. This designation tells me we're taking the right steps."



University of  
NORTH ALABAMA





# University of NORTH ALABAMA and NASA Agree to Partnership



The University of North Alabama and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) have agreed to a partnership, with students reaping the benefits.

As part of this endeavor, UNA hosted a NASA day on campus on February 7. Information about the program was provided, and NASA officials were on hand to speak with various classes across campus. The day culminated with the official signing of the agreement between the two entities.

The partnership with NASA will initially include the College of Business and the College of Arts and Sciences, and will focus on attracting high-quality undergraduate students majoring in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, management, marketing and entrepreneurship disciplines.

"The program is an innovative approach to engage students early on as undergraduates and employ nontraditional classroom methods to allow top students to engage in experiential learning," said Dr. Santanu Borah, UNA professor of Management and Marketing. "The purpose of the path is to provide high-achieving students with the business knowledge needed to successfully manage high-tech businesses," he said.

Students will have the opportunity to gain entrepreneurial experience focused on how to conduct market analysis and commercialization methods on NASA patents. Under the collaboration, NASA will make

selected patents available for UNA students enrolled in this program to conduct market analysis and prepare both a classroom presentation and a written report. NASA, on the other hand, will benefit from the identification of new markets and commercial partners.



Whitney Young, Partnership Manager, NASA, with Ken Kitts, President

# COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

# WINS BIG IN 2016

The University of North Alabama College of Business keeps racking up the accolades, with the most recent being a University Economic Development Association (UEDA) 2016 Award of Excellence for Innovation and Talent.

UNA's Shoals Shift, developed in the College of Business, beat out a record number of applicants for the top spot at the UEDA's Annual Summit, which took place October 16-19 in Roanoke, Virginia. Award recipients were selected by a panel of peers consisting of university and economic development professionals.

The UEDA awards are designed to help accelerate these programs by

recognizing cutting edge initiatives, and to promote their adoption by other universities and communities. Program categories include: Innovation, Talent, and Place, as well as the intersections of these three categories.

The College of Business will also receive over \$80,000 from the State of Alabama Department of Commerce for their User Experience program.

UNA was recently awarded \$81,300 by the Alabama Innovation Fund for a User Experience (UX) Accelerator Center. The project's funding was approved by Secretary of Commerce Greg Canfield and Gov. Robert Bentley and will be used

to create, develop, and sustain the center, which will be administered through UNA's College of Business.

The proposed UX Accelerator Center will cost \$166,796 and will serve entrepreneurs and companies of all sizes, with an emphasis on small and medium size businesses. The Center will provide UX testing and design, outreach to businesses, and UX education for undergraduate students.

## University of NORTH ALABAMA Sees Great Success with Inaugural Day of Giving Event

Taking a page from #GivingTuesday, the University of North Alabama Foundation hosted the first ever UNA Giving Day November 29, to coincide with the global day of philanthropy.

Haley Brink, director of annual giving at UNA, said they weren't looking for a set amount of money to raise; they were more concerned with the number of people who gave during the 24-hour fundraising drive.

"We had initially set a goal of 100 donors for the whole day," said



Brink. "We were thrilled to get over 220 donors who helped us raise over \$41,000. Everybody really came together on this and we're just so thankful for their support," she said.

While the event primarily focused on social media, the University also hosted a phone-a-thon during the day and set up credit card machines around campus to collect additional donations.

Official numbers show UNA raised \$41,868 from 224 donors, with a majority of the money going toward current use funds in the foundation. Twenty-four of the donors were first-time donors to UNA. Brink said they hope to increase in both amount and new donors next year.





# ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

## JOAN MOLLOHAN

"Who knew in 1972 that a turquoise ribbon and invitation to be a charter member and pledge Zeta Tau Alpha at UNA would lead to a lifetime of sisterhood and leadership?" said **Joan Mollohan '76**, one of the University's Alumni of the Year. Joan counts as precious her year spent as a traveling leadership consultant for ZETA, and she is proud to be from UNA. In the following years, her success only grew as her career in human resources took off.

Joan was a trusted Human Resources Senior Executive who demonstrated servant leadership in collaboration, innovation, strategic thinking and problem solving with complex HR disciplines. She is energetic, compassionate, service-oriented and mission-driven through the engagement of human capital; she is an experienced healthcare executive coach, a change agent, and champion of leadership development programs.

In 2007 she was named as one of the Top 50 Women of the Year in New Orleans. In 2011 she was named as one of the 10 Most Powerful and Influential Women in Louisiana by the National Diversity Council.

When she began her executive HR career at Ochsner Health System, they

had one hospital and 4,000 employees - when she retired they had 10 hospitals and 15,000 employees. During the national American crisis of Hurricane Katrina, Joan moved into her office at Ochsner Hospital and worked 24 hours a day to provide services to keep the hospital operating. Her dedication during this natural disaster highlighted her career-long community focus.

In addition to being a charter member and pledge of Zeta Tau Alpha at UNA, she served her fraternity by being an advisor to the University of New Orleans Chapter and serving as a National Officer, District President for Louisiana, for almost 10 years.

Since her retirement in 2014, Joan has been the Board Chair of Girl Scouts Louisiana East with responsibility for over 20,000 girls. She has worked with the Girl Scouts for more than 25 years as troop leader, service unit leader, board member, and officer. She is passionate about young girls building courage, confidence, and character, and having opportunities to learn, grow, and develop into future women leaders.

Joan and her husband Bob are the parents of two children, Gini and Robert Jr. (Jay). They have three grandchildren, Bella, Claire, and Jack.





# ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

## GRAHAM SISSON

**Graham Sisson '87** was appointed to the United States Military Academy and was scheduled to report for basic training at West Point when a drunk driver changed his life forever. Graham had a closed head injury and permanent paralysis from the waist down as a result of the June 1982 head-on collision – but he was determined that the accident was not going to stop him from pursuing a life of purpose and joy.

Just a few months later, in January 1983 Graham entered the University of North Alabama. He was a member of Alpha Tau Omega and also served as Student Government Association president and on the staff of the Diorama yearbook. He graduated summa cum laude in 1987 with a Bachelor of Science in accounting with minors in English and history. He received the Keller Key (highest GPA) and Turris Fidelis award upon his graduation.

Graham then attended Vanderbilt Law School where he was appointed to the Law School Honor Council, graduating with his jurisprudence degree in 1990. He worked for several Birmingham law firms before he was appointed a deputy attorney general and an assistant attorney general with the State of Alabama. He now serves as the

State's ADA Coordinator and Assistant Attorney General with the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services. He was reappointed by Governor Robert Bentley as the Director of the Governor's Office on Disability and State ADA Coordinator.

He has published several papers and has given over 500 presentations on different aspects of the Americans with Disabilities Act, including employment, public access, and private business provisions.

Graham also serves as an adjunct law professor teaching a disability law course at the Birmingham School of Law and is currently teaching a doctoral course in disability law and history at Auburn University. He is a doctoral candidate in rehabilitation at Auburn University.

He is a graduate of the 2005 Leadership Birmingham Class, often traveling to Montgomery and statewide in his service to Rehabilitation Services.

Graham is married to the former Victoria Franklin. His hobbies are vegetable gardening and woodworking. He is also a certified scuba diver.

# HOMECOMING AWARDS 2016

## LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT



**Jean Johnson** served this University for more than thirty-nine years. She began her career in 1965 and has been an exemplary professor of English and represented UNA through her numerous publications and presentations, as well as her memberships in scholastic honor societies and professional organizations. Of particular note is her long and devoted service to all matters pertaining to freshman English. Johnson received the Outstanding Educator Award, Women of Distinction Program, from the Girl Scouts of North America; an Outstanding Educator Award from Delta Kappa Gamma Society; and held the Laura M. Harrison Endowed Professorship in English. She received a certificate of merit for outstanding volunteer service to the Shoals community and is listed in Who's Who of Women in Education.

Because of her motivational skills and her excellent teaching methods, she influenced many students to enter the teaching profession. She was an enthusiastic professor and encouraged her students to develop those traits as well. Dr. Johnson was an avid supporter and facilitator of University readmission, library, research/development, and fundraising committees. She created an endowed scholarship in 2000 for students in the Department of English, and was an officer in Phi Kappa Phi.

Since her retirement she has been reading, traveling with grandchildren in the U.S. and abroad, attending Florence Discussion Club meetings, teaching Sunday School, singing in the church choir, and leading a monthly "Singing in the Spirit" hymn ministry at Merrill Gardens.



**Harry and Beth Smith** have a passion for sharing their values of integrity, compassion, love, and generosity in a practical and life-affirming way. Harry graduated from Florence State College (FSC) in 1964 with a degree in accounting while Beth earned her first degree in 1969 from Florence State University and again in 1981 from the University of North Alabama. After graduating, Harry worked as a CPA for 16 years before moving to Memphis, Tenn., to become co-owner, chairman, and CEO of Schilling Enterprises. The Smiths made a generous donation to the Build the Pride Campaign by establishing an endowed scholarship honoring President William G. Cale and President Robert M. Potts. This scholarship benefits the Honors Program at UNA. They also established a scholarship in honor of Harry's former professors Dean Lawrence Conwill and Roy Stevens in the College of Business.

They have recently announced another tangible gift to UNA because many nursing students do not have the financial means to finish a degree without incurring student loan

debt. Encouraged by the College of Nursing's mission of "improving health in the community by effecting change in systems and policies, and to promote research and scholarly activities that advance nursing knowledge," the Smiths established the Grace Foundation Excellence Scholarship.

Harry believes that relationships matter most and with gratitude for those who modeled integrity and counseled him along the way, he delivers timeless values and practical wisdom. The Smiths attend Bellevue Baptist Church where Harry is a deacon.

Harry and Beth have been married more than 53 years. They have a daughter, Leslie, who is married to Rex Jones, and three grandsons: Barrett, Harrison, and Walker Jones.

*The Lifetime Achievement Award was created in 1997 to recognize and honor those who have left lasting impressions on this campus. A brick in a permanent location in our Alumni Victory Garden is reserved for the Lifetime Achievement Award winners.*

## EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR



**Dr. Tracy Lloyd-Jones '88** received a Bachelor of Arts in Foreign Languages and is currently working with the Defense Language Institute (DLI) in Monterey, Calif., with the Department of the Army. As a fulltime French professor and Teaching Team leader, she devises weekly schedules for students and teachers, and prepares and chairs meetings with her Teaching Team and with students. At DLI Tracy teaches students from the ranks of soldier to colonel in their Intensive Elementary French Program. This is a twenty-six week program where students in general start with no knowledge of French yet they are required to pass the Oral Proficiency Test (OPI) in the twenty-fifth week as well as the Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT) in Week 26.

In spite of the challenges associated with managing 20 French professors from different backgrounds and cultures, Tracy, who is committed to excellence in everything she does, is more than up to the task. She is very supportive of the teachers under her supervision. She encourages them to take on other responsibilities for their professional growth. Curriculum development, research, assessment training, and presentations are only a few examples of her committed support to professional development for all teachers. Many of Tracy's former students stay in touch years after graduation.



**Carlos Nelson '96** received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Secondary Education (social science), a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership, and an Educational Specialist Degree in Educational Leadership from the University of North Alabama. He earned his doctorate in Educational Leadership from Samford University and is currently the deputy superintendent of Sheffield City Schools. He has been in the education field for twenty years, serving in the capacity of classroom teacher, football/baseball coach, assistant principal, principal, federal programs coordinator, curriculum director, career technical education director, textbook coordinator, and district drug testing coordinator. During his career in education, he has been an active member of the Council of Leaders for Alabama Schools and the Alabama Association of School Curriculum Directors, serving on both boards of directors. Carlos also currently serves on the Board of Directors for Shoals Scholar Dollars, SafePlace, and the Alabama Council for Leadership Development. Carlos has presented at the CLAS New Principals Institute and the Alabama Association of Higher Education Diversity Officers Comprehensive Diversity Conference at the University of North Alabama.

He is married to the former Deirdre Mullins, a school counselor in the Muscle Shoals City School System, and he is a member of Eastside Church of Christ and Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.



**David Waters '97** earned his Master's in Music Education in 2003 and is currently director of bands at Muscle Shoals High School/Middle School. Waters designs, writes and arranges music/drill for the marching band and the concert percussion ensemble. David received the 2010 Southeastern Percussion Educator of the Year award and is often a presenter at district and national conferences. He served as UNA drum major and as adjunct faculty with the UNA music department's W.C. Handy Jazz Band Camp. He is considered to be a leader of innovation in the marching and symphonic band community of Alabama and consistently earns superior ratings and grand championship awards each year. Under his instruction, the percussion section enjoyed competitive success in WGI, winning two gold medals, one silver medal, and four bronze medals in a seven-year span at World Championships.

He is currently serving as District III Vice Chairman of the Alabama Bandmasters Association and is past chairman of the Shoals Area Band Directors Association. He also occasionally plays music professionally as either a percussionist, drum set player, or saxophonist.

David is married to Christy Corble Waters, who is also a graduate of UNA. He considers his daughter Emmie Beth to be his greatest accomplishment in life.

*The Educator of the Year award is most appropriate as the University has a long-standing reputation as an outstanding institution for teacher education and administration. The University was originally a state normal school, becoming a state teachers college and ultimately a fine institute of Higher Education.*

# HOMECOMING AWARDS 2016

## COMMUNITY SERVICE



**Melissa Bailey '98** received a Bachelor of Science in professional geography in 1998. She has been the City of Florence Director of Planning and Community Development since 2003, and she was named Geography Alumna of the Year in 2011. Melissa received the American Planning Association, Alabama Chapter "Plan of the Year" award in 2010. She is chair of the Shoals Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, the TVA Master Plan Advisory Committee, and the City of Florence Walk of Honor Planning Committee, and she is active in the American Planning Association and the City of Florence Board of Zoning Adjustment. She serves her community by holding membership in the Florence Main Street Board of Directors, as trustee and campaign chair for the United Way of the Shoals, and as team co-coordinator of the American Heart Association Relay for Life. Melissa is involved in the St. Joseph Catholic School Board as president and as PTO president, and she is a member of both the Florence High School Quarterback Club and the Tennis Booster Club. She is a cheerleading coach for Upward Sports, and serves on the Board of Directors of the Southeastern Color Guard Circuit. She is married to David Bailey and they have two children, John David and Olivia.



**Brad Botes '83** graduated with a double major in business management and political science. He served as president of the UNA Student Government Association for two years. He received a Juris Doctorate degree from Cumberland School of Law at Samford University, and he was recently named a Birmingham "Top Lawyer for 2016." Brad is the founder and president of each of the Bond and Botes Law firms, which are located in Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee, managing the team of lawyers since its inception in 1989. A member of the National Association of Consumer Bankruptcy Attorneys, Brad has served as a member of its Board of Directors and as its first full time Executive Director. He has lectured on various bankruptcy topics to local and national gatherings of bankruptcy attorneys, trustees, and judges. His community service includes serving as a member of the Board of Directors of the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Birmingham, the Alabama Head Injury Foundation, and the Alabama Coalition against Rape. Brad also donates a great deal of time and energy to community projects, most notably as past president and board member of the Birmingham Crisis Center. Brad is married to UNA graduate Kaye Benson Botes '84 and they are the parents of Bradford, Meredith, and Phillip.



**Holly Hollman '96** received a Bachelor of Science degree in journalism and serves as the City of Athens grant coordinator/communications specialist. She oversees media relations, social media communications, and grant writing and grant management. She has trained as a public information liaison for Athens-Limestone Emergency Management Agency related to emergencies at Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant, and works with city departments and outside first response agencies to coordinate communications during natural or manmade disasters.

Holly's community service includes City of Athens Relay for Life Team Captain; volunteer with Team Victory 4 All's Childhood Cancer Awareness Superhero Day; secretary and past Publicity Committee chair for Spirit of Athens; publicity chair for the Athens Grease Festival, which won a Best Promotion Award in 2014 from Main Street Alabama; publicity volunteer with Athens Saturday Market Committee, which won a Best Promotion Award in 2015 from Main Street Alabama; organizer for the Athens-Limestone Community Breakfast, which benefits the Arrowhead District of the Boy Scouts; organizer of the Athens Mayor's Youth Commission, which introduces high school students to city government, career options, grant funding, and community service projects.

Holly received the 2016 Volunteer of the Year Award from Spirit of Athens and the 2011 Habitat for Humanity Excellence in Journalism Award.

*Each year the Alumni Association recognizes model citizens for service to their community. These are individuals who have long been involved both professionally and as a volunteer to the community in which they live.*

## FACULTY / STAFF SERVICE



**Dr. Jana Beaver '98** received a Master of Arts in Education in Business and Office Education degree and a doctorate from the University of Alabama. Currently an associate professor of management, Jana is a member of Phi Kappa Phi, the Muscle Shoals Chapter of Institute of Management Accountants, and the National Business Education Association. She received the College of Business Faculty Service Award in 2012 and is a member of the Faculty Senate, the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, and the Multicultural Advisory committee. Beaver presented on "Professionalism" at the UNA SGA Leadership Summit for area high school students and regularly presents business-related topics in the community and nationwide as a representative from the College of Business. A native of Tuscumbia, Jana worked for Tuscumbia City Schools before joining the faculty of UNA. Jana's mother, **Dr. Joan Parris '74 & '76**, received the Faculty/Staff Service Award in 2015.



**Dr. Lee Renfroe '84** is associate professor of health education and received a Master's and an Ed.D. at the University of Alabama. Lee has taught at UNA since 2005. She serves as Faculty Senator for HPER and in undergraduate core competencies as a mentor in the UNA Academic Colloquium on Student Research. She has served on the Exercise Science Visiting Scholar Faculty Search Committee and as a judge for UNA Research Day. Lee has served on the Wellness Council of America and the Alabama State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. She has co-authored scholarly performance/research and presented at conferences state and nationwide. Lee received the Health Educator of the Year award in 2015. She is a Certified Wellness Coach and she is certified in National Institutes of Health Training (protecting human research subjects). Her parents both graduated from UNA and her family relationship through the generations has played a vital role in her love for the University.



**Stephanie Montgomery '86** received a Bachelor of Science Degree in communications and psychology from UNA, a Master's from the University of Alabama, and she is a fourth year Ph.D. student at the University of Memphis. She is an instructor in fundamentals of speech, interpersonal communication, nonverbal communication, and other related communication courses of study. Stephanie is faculty advisor for Lambda Pi Eta, the national communication association's honor society, and in 2012 she formed LionCom, a public communication organization for students in the department and others who want to learn more about communication, participate in workshops, plan events, and serve students through speech mentoring. She has participated in peer presentations at conferences at the state and national level. Stephanie is the president-elect of Phi Kappa Phi and received the 2014 Eleanor Gauder Excellence in Teaching Award, the Best of Alabama Award for NACADA (the National Academic Advising Association), and the Academic Achievement Award at UNA in 1997.

*The Faculty/Staff Service Awards are presented to successful alumni among peers on this campus. These award winners possess far-reaching, long-term involvement and influence with students, organizations, and colleagues at the University.*

# HOMECOMING AWARDS 2016

## FRIEND OF THE UNIVERSITY



A UNA faculty member since 1996, **Dr. Sharon Campbell** recently retired as Chair of the Department of Accounting and Business Law. She served in the Faculty Senate representing the Department of Accounting and Business Law and was a member of numerous UNA affiliations, including the Academic Affairs Teaching Award Selection Committee, the UNA Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, and the UNA SACS Financial Resources Committee. She was treasurer of the UNA Phi Kappa Phi Chapter, and she worked with the Alabama Society of CPAs' Student Interview Day. Sharon served as a board member for the Muscle Shoals Chapter of the Institute of Management Accountants, and is a member of the Alabama Society of CPAs. She has held membership in the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants since 1980. She was a member of the American Accounting Association, 1997-2012, and for thirteen years was coordinator of the Accounting Awards Banquet.

**Dr. Walter Campbell** retired after teaching in the UNA Accounting

Department for seventeen years. His distinguished academic career included work as an accounting professor at seven other universities, and he worked in public accounting prior to teaching. While at UNA Walter developed and maintained the UNA College of Business alumni database, searching archival graduation records. He coordinated COB receptions in Birmingham, Huntsville, Nashville, Memphis, and the Shoals. He is a member of Delta Mu Delta and the Muscle Shoals Chapter of the Institute of Management Accountants. The Alabama Society of CPAs named him the Accounting Educator of the Year in 2012 and Alpha Chi named him Business Professor of the Year in 2004 and 2006.

Together Walter and Sharon established the Campbell Accounting Endowed Scholarship in 2010 through the UNA Foundation and the UNA Lion Match Fund, and in 2015 assisted with funding to reach endowed status for the scholarship. They are the parents of two children, Neil (Kelly) and Shannon (Andy Venuto), and are the proud grandparents of Ian.

*The Friend of the University Award honors those who promote the mission of the University by their donation of time, resources, and energy. Their work is a labor of love. They are patrons, selecting deserving causes and special interests where they can share their expertise and talents.*

## MILITARY SERVICE



**Master Sergeant Leray Smedley '01** received the "The Spirit of Hope Award" Medallion at the Pentagon in Washington D.C. after selflessly volunteering over 300 hours, raising \$66,000, and leading 3,000 military and civilians towards serving the Beale Air Force Base and local community in 70 events. He boosted morale for burn victims at Shriner's Hospital and dispersed school supplies to 360 children. Leray engineered an "Airman's Attic" food drive which led to the collection of more than 640 items and he orchestrated a monthly soup kitchen operation. His tremendous contributions, commitment, and service in support of service members led to the Hope award.

Recently Leray served as Network Operations Manager at NATO headquarters Norfolk where he directly oversees technical support and network diagnostic repairs that support communication for 3,000 personnel representing 28 nations. In his assignment as a communications team leader for the President of the United States of America, he was selected to provide normal and emergency communications requirements for the Commander-in-Chief. He epitomizes the Air Force core values of integrity first, service before self, and excellence in all he does. He makes his home in the D.C. area.

*The Military Service Awards recognize the best of the best. These are the men and women from our armed services who have chosen careers dedicated to the service of our country and to the protection of each one of us.*

## PROMISING ALUMNI



**Brandon Brown** is a senior majoring in accounting. He is the UNA Club Soccer Team president and has been honored as an Accounting Scholar. Brandon has been President of the Honors Student Organization, as well as a College of Business Ambassador. Brandon is from Greenville, Ala.



**Sarah Green**, of Harvest, Ala., serves as this year's Student Government Association president. She is a political science major, a LaGrange Society Ambassador, member of the UNA Swim Team, and a sister of Phi Mu. She is also in the Pi Sigma Alpha Honor Society.



**Noelle Hall** is majoring in nursing. She was a member of the 2015 and 2016 SOAR teams and is a current member of Alpha Gamma Delta and the Student Nurses Association. Noelle is a member of Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society and the National Society of Leadership and Success. She is a native of Florence.



**Lee Mayhall** is a chemistry and industrial hygiene major from Jackson, Tenn. He was on the football team from 2012 to 2015 and is involved in the campus outreach ministries. He is the treasurer for the Industrial Hygiene Student Association, a member of the Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, and Hampshire Honor Society.



**Gabriela Gomez** is an accounting major. Her involvement includes College of Business Ambassador and she is a member of Beta Alpha Psi. Gabriela also has received the Alabama Society of Certified Public Accountants Educational Foundation Chairman's Award.



**Carson Hagood** is a nursing major from Cornersville, Tenn. He is involved in the Honors Program and the Student Nursing Association. Carson has been a SOAR Counselor as well as LaGrange Society Ambassador. He is in Alpha Lambda Delta, Phi Eta Sigma, and Phi Kappa Phi Honors Societies.



**Hannah Hopkins** is a computer science major. Her involvement includes 2015 Head SOAR Counselor, LaGrange Society Ambassador, College of Business Ambassador, and Phi Mu Fraternity vice president. Hannah, who is in the Honors Program, is from Florence.



**Patrick Twesme** is an accounting major and a member of the UNA Golf Team. He serves on the Student Athletic Advisory Committee and is a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. Patrick is from Florence.

*UNA faculty and staff nominate seniors excelling in leadership, scholastics, character, service, and potential to receive the Promising Alumni Award. We are proud of their service to the University and we believe they will be outstanding alumni leaders in the future.*



# For the Anderson Family, Philanthropy Equals Happiness



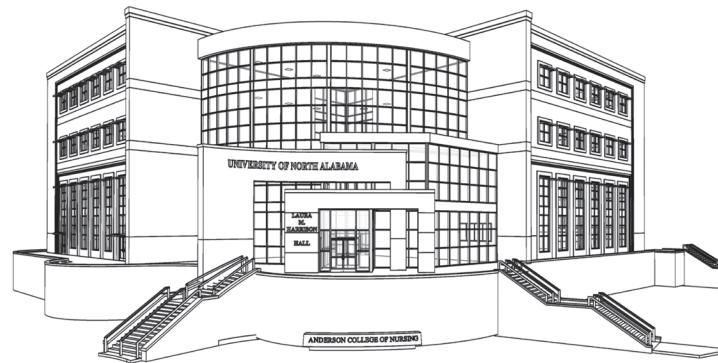
*"We're telling all these kids they can't come here because we're facility limited, so I said, let's build a building. And...we're building a building!"*

*— Joel Anderson*

Joel, Terry, and Charles '56 Anderson

The key to philanthropy is "just being a nice person," according to Joel Anderson. As vice president of the UNA Board of Trustees and member of one of the Shoals' most philanthropic families, that simple idea influences how he lives his life. In fact, he said that making "little contributions, little steps, little advancements so that people around you can live better lives" is at the core of everything that he and his family have done over the past century.

Since 1917, "being nice" is exactly what the Anderson family has done. They have worked on making the lives of their



neighbors better, starting with Clyde Anderson and the newsstand he started on the corner of Court and Tennessee Streets one hundred years ago. Following in their father's footsteps, brothers Charles and Joel, "just kind of fell into a rhythm" of giving back. "The more you do, the more you enjoy it, and the more you enjoy it, the more you do."

The family's latest contribution, a \$3 million donation toward the development of UNA's College of Nursing, will help push UNA's already-competitive program forward into new territory. The Anderson College of Nursing will be housed in an all-new, state-of-the-art facility where Floyd Hall is currently located on campus. With construction set for May 2017, students should be taking classes in the building as early as 2018.

The new facility, made possible in part by the Anderson family's generous donation, will more than triple the nursing program's space from approximately 15,000 square feet to 50,000, and the building's new, updated technology will train several generations of nurses to be better prepared for modern hospital floors.



Architectural renderings courtesy of Create Architects, Dante, Bernard, & Andrews.

Elder brother Charles is excited to be involved in the project and has high hopes for the future of the nursing program. During a recent interview after receiving the Horatio Alger award for community service and support of higher education, hallmarks of his life, Charles said that "to be able to participate, to provide some resources to help them, I think is a tremendous opportunity. I am honored, and I am very excited about it." The Anderson College of Nursing is a testament to that dedication.

The new facility will not only allow UNA to continue to prepare nurses to practice in the global health care environment, but it will also allow the university to train more nurses. "We're having to turn down two out of three qualified applicants for nursing," said Joel Anderson. "Does that sound right to you? We've got the demand, we've got the staff, we've got everything they need. We just don't have a building to house it. We're telling all these kids they

can't come here because we're facility limited, so I said, let's build a building. And...we're building a building!"

For Charles Anderson, helping others pursue a college education is one of the major benefits of his philanthropy and is one of the best ways a person can give back to the community. "I think you need a college education to give you the tools [for success]. I think it also gives you something else. I think it gives you a certain confidence." The expansion of the Anderson College of Nursing is a way for more and more students to gain those tools and that confidence. The continued growth of the program is possible not only because of the family's donation, but also because of their dedication to higher education in general.

This donation to the Anderson College of Nursing is only the latest in a long line of contributions the family has made to the Shoals community and to the University. With a diverse portfolio of businesses

including TNT Fireworks and Books-A-Million (BAM!), the Andersons maintain their offices and homes right here in Florence. Being located in the Shoals is a deliberate choice by the family for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the size of the community and how good people tend to be toward each other.

"Over my career, I've had many opportunities to relocate," said Joel. "I've traveled extensively, but I've just never found a place I like better. It's warm, it's comfortable, and I like the people here." But Joel's commitment runs deeper than just choosing to live in Florence; he also has "always been interested in making this a better community. I've always been proud of it, and I just want to be prouder."

The family's businesses contribute greatly to the economy of the Shoals, especially with BAM! being the second-largest bookstore chain in the United States and TNT the largest fireworks distributor in the country. While their businesses undoubtedly

help the area in a number of ways, their community involvement is what really makes the family noteworthy. And maybe more specifically than that, their encouragement for other people to become involved is improving the lives of their neighbors.

Terry Anderson, Charles' son and TNT Fireworks Chairman, has always been involved in the family businesses and their community service. While his family would have been happy if he had chosen to go into any field, going into the family business was really the only choice for him. "There's no way to say it other than we were blessed," said his father. Like father, like son, Terry continues his family's tradition of philanthropy and community involvement through his nonprofit work and charitable giving.

Not everyone can fund a College of Nursing, for instance, but everyone is capable of making the lives of those around them more comfortable, more inviting, and more prosperous. "We can all do something. Opportunities to give back are amazingly easy to find," said Joel. "You just have to open your eyes and look."

That's easy for Joel to say, though, since he has what he calls "a curious twinge" that causes him to continually seek new ways to become involved. For those without that twinge, he suggests that folks first look at themselves and what truly matters to them. The Andersons advise the community to keep busy with events and causes they are passionate about. "Not just having a passing interest, but real passion," Joel said. "That way, when you accomplish whatever your objective is, you can look back and be proud of it."

The Andersons are definitely proud of the future of nursing at UNA. Joel said that the University has "a fabulous nursing program, one of the top in the South. And there's a critical national shortage of nurses, so we're helping that problem, too. It's kind of a win-win-win. Everybody comes out a winner on this one."

Nursing students will "win" because their education will be provided in a state-of-the-art facility made possible in part by the Anderson Family Foundation's generous donation. The nursing profession

"wins" any time more nurses are added to the workforce, and the Shoals "wins" because the program and the University will grow and, in turn, will help Florence and the rest of the Shoals grow as well. "It's about being a good neighbor, being a good person, and making people's lives better and happier."

With such an earnest ideal guiding their family, the Andersons have set a pretty high bar for the rest of the Shoals community. All of it comes back around to what Joel Anderson believes about being a nice person and a good neighbor. He suggests finding a hole that needs to be filled and filling it. Not because you have to, but because you want to and you can.

"Philanthropy is something we all should do," he said. "Let me tell you, if you're walking down the street and you pass someone, and you smile, that's philanthropy. You just did something good for someone. You brightened their spirits, their moments."





# A letter from *Robert Steele*

Fellow Lions, Friends, and Supporters of the University of North Alabama,

It was truly an honor to be able to celebrate being inducted into the UNA Hall of Fame this past year. UNA is a special place to me and I wanted to share a few personal thoughts as it relates to my experience at UNA and what I believe are a student athlete's/student's experience through life.

Life is a series of moments. My mom taught me about cooking. My father taught me about constructing a house. My teachers taught me reading, writing, and arithmetic along with many other things. Administrators kept me in line, disciplined, and encouraged me throughout my educational experience. My coaches taught me about game plans, physical training, and pushing myself beyond what I believed I was capable. My family has been, and always will be, by my side. My friends have supported me through the good times and bad.

But here's the thing: that the cake my mother taught me to bake and the houses and apartments my father allowed me to watch being built looked much different in the beginning and middle than

they did in the end. It is the same at the beginning of a school year, a college experience, and even throughout life. The end is a much more complete picture than the beginning.

What I am referring to are moments in time. Each of us experiences moments in time throughout our lives that ultimately become the fabric of our lives.

In 1974, I arrived on the campus of the newly named University of North Alabama physically, mentally, and emotionally unprepared to become a college student or a football player for the university.

In the spring of 1975, my freshman year, I suffered my first knee injury. My ACL ligaments were torn off the bone and my cartilage was shattered. Surgery was required. I spent eight weeks on crutches hobbling around campus, climbing stairs to my classes in Bibb Graves and Keller Halls. Fully recovered, I entered my sophomore year excited about playing the season. That did not happen. Halfway through the season, I injured my right knee (Coach Gaskell called it my good knee) which required surgery as well.

Eight more weeks of crutches hauling my body around campus attending classes,



Robert Steele '78

rehabilitating my knee and wondering if I would ever play another down of football was more troubling the second time around. One knee surgery is usually a death knell for your career. Two is almost certainly so.

While preparing for the 1976 season, I quickly realized that my upper body had developed from those 16 weeks of crutches. I was physically bigger, stronger and even faster following my rehabilitation from the surgeries. I did not notice it then, but I realized it much later that those moments in time worked to my benefit, not my detriment.

Two healthy football seasons later, I was preparing for graduating from UNA physically, mentally, and emotionally a much different person than I was a mere four years prior following my arrival onto the UNA campus.

Ten days before my class finals, the Dallas Cowboys came to campus and put me through a series of time trials, agility drills, and interviews to see if I was worthy of being selected to become a Dallas Cowboy. I was not selected as a draft choice but as a free agent to sign a contract along with 12 draft choices and 79 other rookie free agents.

I negotiated my contract at Dale's Restaurant with Cornell Green, without an agent. Years later, I realized that during my time in the business classes taught by Dr. Barry Morris and Mr. Bud Smith, along with many others, I was taught how to think critically and creatively and successfully negotiated my contract to become a free agent with the Cowboys.

I reported to training camp listed number 20 on the depth chart of 20. The first four receivers were Drew Pearson, Golden Richards, Tony Hill, and Butch Johnson. The Cowboys were the World Champions having defeated Denver in Superbowl XII. A short six weeks later, Gil Brandt came up to me and said "Robert, you have had a great training camp. In fact, we keep stats on every pass thrown your way and for every receiver as well. You scored the highest pass/catch ratio in the history of training camp. Keep it up."

Jim Goodman, my receivers coach, made me do fingertip pushups, which strengthened my hands to the point that I could catch a pass one-handed across the field. Another moment in time.

After the Cowboys traded Golden Richards to the Chicago Bears, a spot was made for me to be a Dallas Cowboy. Only five rookie players made the team

that season, four draft choices and one free agent. So, 45 returning veterans, 12 draft choices and a total of 80 free agents all competed for a total of 45 roster spots. I ended up being the only free agent out of 80 to make the World Champion Dallas Cowboys. The Dallas newspapers had written that I had a million to one shot to make the team. Well, thanks to my time at UNA, those odds did not bother me one bit.

Playing in SuperBowl XIII, to a crowd of eighty-five thousand people and millions of television viewers, brought my mind back to Braly Stadium and the fact that both fields were fifty-five yards wide and 100 yards long. Identical in almost all aspects and the lessons learned there helped me stay focused at a stadium just one year removed from my UNA experience.

I had set two goals concerning my NFL career prior to my arrival. One was to make the Cowboys team. Next was to receive a game ball. I accomplished both. My mistake, and something I learned a

hard lesson from, was the fact that once I accomplished those two goals, I did not set a third or even fourth goal. Football was removed from my life as a result.

The good news was that the University of North Alabama prepared me for life during football and for life after football. I am fortunate to be where I am today.

The moments I have described here are moments of time in my life, but could be applied to any student. The similarity is that the moments we all experienced and are experiencing at UNA have prepared us for the future. These moments and accomplishments we are experiencing together today were created because of parents, teachers, administrators, coaches, family, and friends.

Quite simply, UNA made me the man I am today. For that, I am eternally grateful.

Make every moment count.

Go Lions!

**Robert Steele '78**

## ROBERT H. STEELE CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL SELLING

University of NORTH ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

### FORMER UNA FOOTBALL STANDOUT GIVES BACK TO COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

**Robert Steele ('78)** may have earned a Super Bowl ring on the field for the Dallas Cowboys in 1978, but before he was a world champion, he earned his B.S. in Marketing from the College of Business at UNA.

Now Steele is giving back to the school that provided him with an education. Steele announced that he has pledged \$200,000 for renaming the College of Business's Center for Professional Selling, the *Robert H. Steele Center for Professional Selling*.

Officials with the University of North Alabama Foundation say the initial \$100,000 received will be distributed to establish a current use fund to assist the *Robert H. Steele Center for Professional Selling* with operational and general project support. The use of the remaining \$100,000 donation will be

decided at a later date.

After graduating from UNA, Steele played for the Dallas Cowboys in 1978. He played for the Minnesota Vikings the next year, before leaving sports and diving into the business world of insurance, where he excelled for over 20 years. During that time, Steele served in the Georgia House of Representatives as a State Representative.

He later ventured into numerous healthcare services, including software, services, and technologies, where he has experienced phenomenal success in sales, marketing and technologies. Steele also authored a book, *Steele Here: An Underdog's Secret to Success*. In 2016, Steele was inducted in the Athletic Hall of Fame at UNA.



Dr. Francis Koti and Dr. Greg Gaston

## UNA Bridges Gaps with GIS and Caring

According to ancient Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." For the University of North Alabama and the University of Dar Es Salaam, the journey to a relationship didn't actually begin with a literal step, but more like a misstep.

If you ask Dr. Francis Koti how the two entities ended up having a relationship, he would respond quite simply, "That's a very interesting question."

"When I interviewed here, I knew I had a plan to conduct a study abroad program in Africa," Koti said. "But I wasn't sure though, because I really wasn't sure how the whole idea of Africa would be welcome. However, after a year had passed I thought, I can probably pull this off."

Koti said his original idea was to bring a group of students to Kenya, his home country. However, he thought it would be prudent to explore the area first and determine what exactly he would be teaching when he got there. After all, Koti had already been teaching African geography in the U.S., but in the field, that's a different perspective.

"I ended up getting a grant from the College of Arts and Sciences in 2005 in order to travel to Kenya. I did some reconnaissance and I was planning to do a home-stay so that our students could have the complete cultural immersion," he said.

Koti came back to the States with a plan, and in 2006 he advertised the program and began collecting students and fees for a summer 2007 trip. There was just one big problem, he said.

"In 2007, there was a U.S. State Department travel advisory to Kenya."

The program was cancelled, with tickets paid and everything ready to go. It was an unfortunate setback and while Koti said he was a little depressed, it did not stop his drive. Three years later, he came up with a different idea: while it was still a trip to Africa, this time the destination was Tanzania.

"It's relatively calm; they speak English. They speak Swahili. I speak Swahili, so you know I thought, I could probably do this," Koti said.

So Koti began to organize a trip, again, and in 2010 with another grant from the College of Arts and Sciences he traveled to Dar Es Salaam, the capital of Tanzania. But this time he had a different approach; he had the idea to work with the local university, the University of Dar Es Salaam.

"I went to the university and introduced myself and basically said



that I was trying to start a study abroad program in Tanzania, but I had no idea about Tanzania other than what I've read. I asked if they'd be willing to work with us," he said.

According to Koti, university officials said they didn't know how they could help, but they were willing to lend a hand. Now that the host was out of the way, Koti began to look into the curriculum. He knew there was a lot of geography in the Mount Kilimanjaro area and on the coast near the university. Koti said he thought he could teach the human geography related to the Rift Valley, and his colleague at UNA, Dr. Greg Gaston, could teach the physical aspects of geography.

With a plan in hand, Koti returned to UNA and asked the then dean for permission. It was granted, and in 2011, Koti, Gaston, and their students were headed to Tanzania.

Professor of Geography at the University of North Alabama, Dr. Greg Gaston, sits amid stacks of books in his quintessential professor's office. Artifacts are scattered amongst maps, old documents, and memorabilia from trips past, including jaunts to Africa, which is

what we're here to talk about today.

"I'm a physical geographer and I do GIS or Geographic Information Systems," Gaston said. "In 2011, Dr. Koti developed a study abroad program in Africa and I went with him in '11 and '12. Not long after, we were sitting around the table at lunch with one of our colleagues from University of Dar Es Salaam, Dr. Herbert Hambati, and I was talking about Fulbright; he was like, 'Well, why don't you conduct your Fulbright studies in Tanzania,'" he said.



One thing led to another, Gaston took Hambati up on his offer, and in 2013 he was back in Tanzania as a Fulbright Scholar.

For some context, GIS in layman's terms is a system designed to capture, store, manipulate, analyze, manage, and present spatial or geographic data. Clearly, this is a technical field that requires some high-tech equipment.

"That was literally their GIS lab," Gaston said as he pointed to a picture of a classroom containing a chalkboard and some desks, and a few ancient computers.

"So one of the things I wanted to do and I mentioned it on my Fulbright application: I had some returned overhead from a grant so I bought five laptop computers and I contacted ESRI," he said.

ESRI is the Environmental Systems Research Institute based in Redlands, California. They are also the standard when it comes to GIS software. Gaston managed to get a 20-minute meeting with





the head honchos and mentioned his plan to provide a few computers with ESRI software to the GIS lab at the University of Dar Es Salaam.

"The University of Dar Es Salaam is now a partner with ESRI," he said. "So I took the five computers I had loaded with the GIS software and I started trying to train graduate students on how to learn."

Flash forward to 2016 and Koti said the project has grown to something they could not even imagine when they started. What started as a few laptops now has grown to a full GIS lab with multi-screen computers.

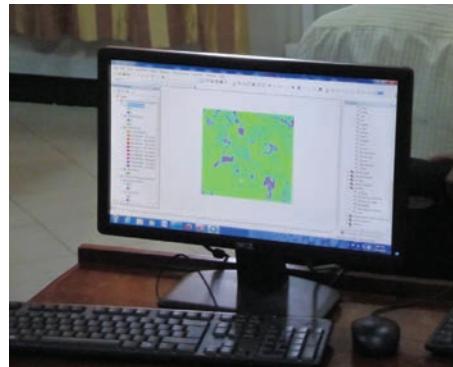
For his part in it, Gaston is hesitant to say it all started with five laptops, but he did mention that he "poked enough things and things happened."

"It was a surprise to me that anything would work like this did, though certainly we were hopeful. I think we're all pleased with how it turned out," Gaston said.

"When ESRI donated the software, they saw an opportunity to expand and they have a hub in neighboring Kenya; their regional ESRI offices are there," Koti said. "So now they send people to the

University of Dar Es Salaam to see what their needs are. Now we are not even a part of the picture. It's bigger than us now," he said.

In terms of stature, as far as GIS programs are concerned, Koti said



the GIS program at Dar Es Salaam is considered to be one of the best in Africa and has transformed how the country does geography. And realistically, it may have started as a fluke. Had Koti visited Kenya, this never would have happened – or would have happened in a different manner, at a different pace.

"It looks like a fluke, but I give more credit to Dr. Gaston," Koti said. "His

courage to stay the course helped a lot in establishing this. But that's not our biggest contribution. Our biggest contribution is getting their students to believe they can actually do what our students do. Getting their students to see themselves as folks who can actually do GIS. To me that's the biggest contribution. It's not computers, because someone could've done that on their own. But to get those students to get with our students, you can't place a value on that," he said.

For more information on Geography at UNA: [una.edu/geography](http://una.edu/geography).



Ashley Moffitt '04, Vanessa Ferretti Howell '06, Robert Steele '78, and Kent Sullivan '92



## ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME INDUCTS FERRETTI, MOFFITT, STEELE and SULLIVAN as Class of 2016

### VANESSA FERRETTI

(Volleyball 2003-05)

A native of Porto Alegre, Brazil, Vanessa Ferretti is one of just 10 student-athletes in school history to be named both All-American and Academic All-America at UNA. A three-year starter for the Lions from 2003-05, she helped lead the team to the NCAA Division II National Championship in 2003, and to Gulf South Conference championships in 2004 and 2005. UNA had a combined 93-16 record during her three seasons in the program. Among her more than 30 individual honors that she received

during her career at UNA, Ferretti was named to the Gulf South Conference Team of the Decade for 2000-09. A first-team AVCA and Daktronics All-American selection as a senior in 2005, she led the NCAA Division II with 757 kills and was third nationally in kills per game at 5.69 while leading UNA to a 36-2 record. Selected second-team All-GSC in 2003, Ferretti was named first-team All-GSC in 2004 and 2005 and was GSC East Division Player of the Year as a junior and senior. She earned six GSC Player of the Week awards and was 2005 GSC Tournament Most Outstanding

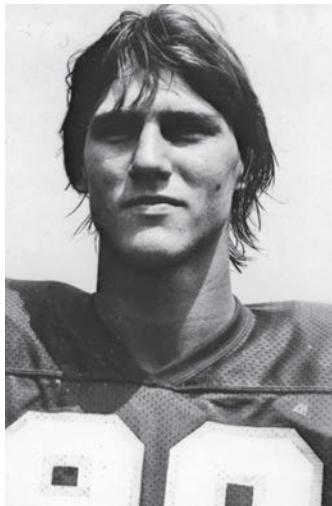
Player. She also received first-team AVCA All-South Region honors in 2004 and 2005, was first-team Daktronics All-South Region in 2005, All-South Region Tournament in 2005, AVCA National Player of the Week for Sept. 12, 2005, and honorable mention AVCA All-American in 2004. An Academic All-GSC selection as a senior in 2005 and a GSC Top 10 honoree, Ferretti was also named CoSIDA Academic All-District and third-team CoSIDA Academic All-America®. Following her graduation from UNA in 2006 with a degree in Political Science, Ferretti played professional



Vanessa Ferretti Howell '06



Ashley Moffitt '04



Robert Steele '78



Kent Sullivan '92

volleyball in Lleida, Spain, at Finques Borrell Camp Escolar. She then served as a graduate assistant volleyball coach at Troy University. She and her husband, Wess Howell, have two sons, Noah and Ben. She currently works as a pre-school teacher in Dothan, Ala., and coaches the Houston Academy Middle School volleyball team.

#### ASHLEY MOFFITT

(Volleyball 2000-03)

A native of Crestwood, Ky., Ashley Moffitt was a three-time All-American selection at UNA and four-time All-Gulf South Conference and All-South Central Region pick during her career with the Lions from 2000-03. She was not only named to the Gulf South Conference Team of the Decade for 2000-09, but was also selected as the GSC East Division Player of the Decade. Moffitt led UNA to a 135-19 combined record from 2000-03. That record included three Gulf South Conference championships (2000, 2001, 2002), four straight NCAA Tournament appearances (2000-03), two Division II Regional Championships (2000, 2003), and the school's first NCAA Division II National Championship in a women's sport (2003). Moffitt led Division II in assists twice and set two Division II national records. She led Division II with 14.07 assists per game in 2001 and 14.35 in 2003. She was also ranked fifth in the nation as a freshman with 13.44 and ninth in the nation as a junior with 13.34. As a freshman in 2000 she was

selected first-team All-GSC, All-GSC Tournament, first-team AVCA All-South Central Region, AVCA South Central Region Freshman of the Year, All-South Central Region Tournament, first-team Daktronics All-South Centrak Region, and third-team Daktronics All-American. In 2001 she was first-team All-GSC, All-GSC Tournament, earned a GSC Player of the Week award, was first-team AVCA and Daktronics All-South Central Region, All-South Central Region Tournament, earned an AVCA National Player of the Week honor and was second-team Daktronics All-American. As a junior in 2002 she was again first-team All-GSC, All-GSC Tournament, and first-team AVCA and Daktronics All-South Central Region. In 2003, Moffitt was first-team All-GSC, All-GSC Tournament, earned two GSC Player of the Week awards, an AVCA National Player of the Week honor, was first-team AVCA and Daktronics All-South Central Region, All-South Central Region Tournament, third-team AVCA All-American, and first-team Daktronics All-American. She was also UNA's co-Female Athlete of the Year for 2003-04. A 2004 UNA graduate with a Bachelor's degree in Human Environmental Sciences, Moffitt later earned an associates degree in Information Technology. She works in medical sales and is employed as a project manager for installation for products in Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICU) across the country.

#### ROBERT STEELE

(Football 1975-77, Baseball 1976)

A native of Columbus, Ga., Robert Steele was a three-year letterman as a wide receiver in football for the Lions from 1975-77 and also played one season of baseball. He went on to become the first UNA Lion to play in a Super Bowl when he played with the Dallas Cowboys in Super Bowl XIII against the Pittsburgh Steelers. While at UNA, he caught 59 passes for 997 yards while battling knee injuries. He was selected second-team All-Gulf South Conference in 1976 and first-team All-GSC as a senior in 1977. Steele signed a free agent contract with the defending Super Bowl Champion Cowboys in 1978 and became the only free agent out of eighty to make the 45-man roster. In 1979 he played for the Minnesota Vikings, and was awarded a game ball against the Tampa Buccaneers for blocking a punt which resulted in a game winning touchdown. In all, Steele played in 30 games during his NFL career. Following his time in the NFL, Steele moved on to become a leader in insurance, benefits, and healthcare fields with technology being his primary focus. Steele currently serves as President of Steele Financial Group, a healthcare technology sales and marketing company. Named to the UNA Team of the Decade for 1969-78, Steele authored a book in 2011 entitled *Steele Here, An Underdog's Secret to Success*, which detailed his journey to earn a spot on the Dallas Cowboys and his later success in the business world.



# ALUMNI PRIDE

Steele is an active speaker and has authored articles on sales, motivation, healthcare and technology over the past 35 years. Steele also served in the Georgia State Legislature as an elected state representative for two years from 1989-90. He has four children and two grandchildren and resides in Las Vegas, Nev.

## KENT SULLIVAN

(Baseball 1990-91)

A native of Signal Mountain, Tenn., Kent Sullivan was a two-year letterman in baseball at UNA in 1990-91. As a senior he was selected All-Gulf South Conference, first-team All-South Region, and third-team All-American by the American Baseball Coaches Association. In April of 1990 he earned a Gulf South Conference Pitcher of the Week honor after pitching in three games and earning two wins for the Lions. He pitched seven and two-thirds innings of relief against 14th ranked Mississippi State to get the win in a 10-3 UNA victory. He scattered six hits while giving up one earned run and striking out four. He then pitched an inning and a third to get a win in relief over Montevallo. He had the lowest ERA in the NCAA Division II in 1991 at 0.68 and had 35 strikeouts with an 8-0 record. He made 27 appearances, with 26 in relief, and fired a complete game shutout in his only start. In 52.2 innings that season, he allowed just 39 hits and 13 walks while striking out 35. He also did not allow a single home run all season. Sullivan had a 15-2 career record and his 88.2 winning percentage is among the best in GSC history. His 1.32 career earned run average is the lowest in GSC history. The Lions had a combined 67-28 record during Sullivan's two seasons at UNA and he helped lead the 1991 squad to a berth in the NCAA South Atlantic Regional. A 1992 UNA graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree in History, Sullivan has worked more than 20 years as a middle school teacher and is currently employed at Space Center Middle School in Seabrook, Texas. He and his wife April have a 16-year-old daughter, Montana, and a 13-year old son, Nash.



Bobby Wallace at Homecoming Lion Walk



President Ken and Dena Kits with children, Colin and Corbin



Summer Richardson and Drake Vaccaro



"Football has been one of the most important things to me, but now football is over. The education that it has helped me receive is something that no one can ever take away from me."

– DeAndre Harrison

# HARRISON and LIONS are TRUE STUDENT-ATHLETES

DeAndre Harrison knows what it means to be a true student-athlete and has always done what it takes to excel in both areas.

An honor student and all-state athlete at Miller Grove High School in Lithonia, Ga., Harrison signed to play football at the University of North Alabama in 2011 and had a plan for success – to use the opportunity to play a sport he loves to earn an education that will benefit him the rest of his life.

As Harrison looks ahead to his graduation this May with a Bachelor of Science degree in Exercise Science with a concentration in Clinical Exercise Physiology, he can look back on a unique career at UNA. He was a member of the first team in Gulf South Conference history to win four straight league football championships and was a contributor on all four squads. The Lions also made four straight NCAA Playoff appearances and advanced to the 2016 Division II National Championship Game. On the academic side, Harrison earned Academic All-GSC honors four straight years, making him just the third student-athlete in school history and one of just a handful in conference history to receive that honor four consecutive years.

"I always knew football would be my platform and would help me get my higher education," Harrison said. "Football has been one of the most important things to me, but now football is over. The education that it has helped me receive is something that no one can ever take away from me."

Harrison's success story is just one of many among the student-athletes at UNA as the Lions have continued their role of championships on the field and high achievements in the classroom.

Harrison was one of 226 student-athletes that the UNA Athletic Department honored on its Academic Night this past February, an honor reserved for those student-athletes who have achieved a 3.2 grade point average or higher in the 2016 Spring or Fall semesters.

Of those student-athletes honored, 56 had perfect 4.0 grade point averages and another 93 had GPAs between 3.50 and 3.99.

As a department, UNA Athletics had a cumulative grade point average above 3.0 for the second straight semester, with a 3.07 in the Spring of 2016 and a 3.02 in the Fall of 2016. Those are the two highest cumulative semester GPAs by the department since similar records began being kept in 2005.

This past Fall, the UNA women's cross country team led the way with a cumulative 3.64 GPA, followed closely by men's tennis (3.58), women's tennis (3.50), women's soccer (3.32), and women's basketball (3.30).

"We really appreciate the hard work that our staff and student-athletes have put in to make academics a top priority," said UNA Athletic Director Mark Linder. "Our mission is Graduating Champions and we are committed to the academic success of our student-athletes. We also want to thank our outstanding faculty that educates our students here at UNA and creates a quality academic environment."

Another UNA student-athlete who enjoyed the highest level of success in

2016-17 was senior volleyball standout Natasha Fomina of Broomfield, Colo. Fomina became just the tenth student-athlete in school history to earn both All-American and Academic All-America® honors. Fomina also helped lead the Lions to back-to-back GSC volleyball titles (2015 and 2016) and NCAA Regional Tournament appearances.

## UNA All-American and Academic All-America®

Ronda Price Bell .....	Volleyball
Rachel Price Brinley .....	Volleyball
Josh Willingham .....	Baseball
Douglas Hargett .....	Baseball
Vanessa Ferretti Howell .....	Volleyball
Will Batson .....	Football
Nikki Brown .....	Soccer
Jake Greer.....	Golf
Chloe Richards.....	Soccer
Natasha Fomina.....	Volleyball



Natasha Fomina

**"Our mission is Graduating Champions and we are committed to the academic success of our student-athletes."**

– Athletic Director Mark Linder

**UNA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OFFICERS**

Michelle Eubanks '96, President  
Aaron Irons '99, President Elect  
Derrick Chatman '08, Vice President  
Bishop Alexander '09, 2nd Vice President  
Christa Raney '97, Secretary  
Raleigh Green '10, Treasurer  
Pat Burney '88, Club Advisor  
Pat Roden '77, Faculty Advisor  
Douglas Hargett '02, Past President  
Haley Brink '08, Director of Alumni Relations

**UNA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Gloria Aday '70  
Bucky Beaver '64  
Bart Black '95  
Mark Blackburn '75  
Andy Betterton '75  
Tosha-Paige Brewer '13  
Robbie Burdine '12  
Anna Wilson Burnley '97  
Jordan Graham '14  
Chase Haggard '04  
Will Hodges '10  
Jan Ingle '85  
Eric Kirkman '97  
Andy Mann '92  
Nikki Mann '94  
Jean McIntyre '65  
Ana Fuller Pannell '06  
Gale Satchel '06  
Rod Sheppard '98  
Larry Softley '89  
Elaine Softley '88  
Katherine Fowler Stone '02  
Linda Vaughan '70  
Maria Warren '00  
Kim West '08  
Cheron Pitts White '98

**UNA ALUMNI CLUB LEADERS****ALABAMA**

Auburn/Opelika • James Langcuster '82  
Athens • Holly Holloman '96  
Montgomery/SE Alabama • Apriell Curtis Hartsfield '00  
Birmingham • Chris Burrell '02  
Colbert/Sheffield • Elaine Witt '76  
Decatur • Patrick Johnson '99  
Florence • Ryan '01 and Lisa Clayton '00  
Huntsville • Laurentis Barnett '03  
Russellville • Heath Daily  
Scottsboro • Stan Mannon '85  
Tuscaloosa • Jim Page '01

**TENNESSEE**

Memphis • Coleman Barron '14  
Nashville • Jamie Moorer Ellis '08  
South Central Tennessee • Mac '72 and Cathy Brown '76

**FLORIDA**

Jacksonville • Maury Shipper '78, Janet Price '77  
Orlando • Lawrence Davis '80

**GEORGIA**

Atlanta • Carnette Johnson '83  
South Georgia • Toby Davis '80

**MISSISSIPPI**

Jackson • Ethan Broadfoot '11  
Northeast Mississippi • Keith Henley '89  
East Central • Michael Thorn '82  
Coastal Mississippi • Rita Buckley '85

**TEXAS**

Dallas Metroplex • Paul Smith '66  
Houston • Tommy McNeill '69  
West Texas • Charles Inman '71

**YOUNG ALUMNI LEADERS**

Bishop Alexander '09

**GEOGRAPHY**

Robert Nall '14

**SOCIAL WORK**

Stacy Lee '01

**UNA BAND**

Jeff McCreary '83

**ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY**

Katie Swann '14

## message from the **ALUMNI PRESIDENT**



Michelle Rupe Eubanks '96

Dear Alumni and Friends of UNA,

It all started with cups, really. When I open my kitchen cabinets, I'm bombarded, sometimes quite literally, by cups from our family's trips to SEC football games. Here's one from an Iron Bowl, or there's the one from that nail-biter of a game against Georgia. They're great memories, these cups.

What I didn't understand was why I had all of these commemorative cups from these other teams, and I didn't have any – not the first one – from my alma mater and that of my husband, Jeff. Where was the purple and gold, the Lions, and the University of North Alabama in all of this?

As president of the Alumni Association, it became my mission to change it. I enlisted the help of first vice president Aaron Irons, and, together, we gathered pricing and samples and a plan. We wanted

these cups to be the Alumni Association's gift to UNA Athletics and their move to Division 1 and the Atlantic Sun Conference.

We've had several conversations with the Executive Council, and the plan will also be presented at the upcoming Alumni Summit. (If you haven't attended one, I certainly recommend it. See what you could be missing?) Further, we've met with the Athletic Department, specifically with Athletic Director Mark Linder, about logistics of sales in the different venues for all sports.

And I'm very happy to report to you, dear readers, that the cups will be available beginning in January of 2018. Clearly, this is an exciting time for the alumni and athletics, and the cups are an embodiment of that excitement. Already, I'm planning to be in the concession line at a basketball game or softball game or baseball game, purchasing my cup and supporting UNA. Of course, they'll be available for the football season, too.

I have no doubt these UNA cups will quickly outnumber those from the other teams that are currently housed in my kitchen cabinets. UNA is our home team, after all.

Speaking of the home team, we welcomed a new member in January. Haley Brink took over her official duties as Director of Alumni Relations. She's been a pleasure to work with during the course of these past few months, and I look forward to seeing her vision for the alumni association grow and develop. We also have a couple of new members on the Executive Council. Christa Rainey is our secretary, and Raleigh Green is serving as our treasurer.

As we look ahead, we'll be reaching out to you for names of individuals whom you believe would be deserving of an award during Homecoming. It's a special time to honor UNA's alumni and friends, and I hope you'll consider nominating those who have been loyal to UNA.

Later this year, you'll be hearing plans for the third Lions Under the Lights dinner to take place on the UNA grounds. We've enjoyed this fundraiser tremendously as it allows us to spotlight the incredible and delicious things happening in the culinary department. You won't want to miss it!

Roar Lions!

**Michelle Rupe Eubanks '96**

2016-2017 Alumni Association President



# ALUMNI PRIDE



Vernon Cox, Lonzie McCants '82, and Will Bragwell



Paul Doughty '66, James Battcher '66, Carl Mathis '66, Alice Trimble '64, Stanley Trimble '64, Sherry Gambel '66, Jo Finch '65, Johnny Finch '66, and Curtis Morris '66



Jonathan Irons and Aaron Irons '99

## Lions Under the Lights



Brian and Jan Ingle '85 with Patricia and Harold Lewis



Haley Brink '08 with Shannon and Brent Hurd



Janet and Greg Carnes with  
Elaine '88 and Larry Softley '89



Lindsey and Butch Davis with  
Chester and Jenny McKinney

## Miss UNA



Saturday January 21, 2017 Victoria Roose was  
crowned the 43rd Miss UNA.

# Q&A

## HALEY BRINK

### New Alumni Relations Director

**Full name?**

Haley Tidwell Brink

**Where were you born?**

Florence, AL (ECM)

**Tell us about your family;  
what does your husband do?**

My husband, Wes, and his family own Brink Apartments and build homes in the Shoals area. Wes and I both grew up in Florence and we married in March 2006. We have two children, Madelyn and Ryder Brink. Madelyn is 7 years old and attends Kilby Laboratory School. Our son, Ryder, just turned 2 years old in December and is full of energy. Our children are the highlight of our day and we enjoy spending as much time with them as possible.

**What attracted you to this position?**

First of all, I have known that I wanted to be in Higher Education since I was 18 years old. My first position in higher education was as a student worker at NWSCC in the Admissions office. After graduating with my BBA from UNA in 2008, I immediately started working for UNA in the Office of International Admissions. Four years later, I was hired as the Director of Annual Giving and I was challenged in a completely new way that I grew to love. I never dreamed that I would have the opportunity to serve UNA as the Director of Alumni Relations, but I knew that it was a chance of a lifetime and I feel so blessed to serve our university in this role.

## **What are some of the biggest challenges you'll be facing?**

I am a planner by nature, so I find myself thinking about club development, events, Homecoming, communication, and new ideas all at once. My past experience has helped me know where to begin, but I want to plan the whole year in a day. I have to remind myself that any position has a learning curve, and I find comfort in knowing that I have a group of UNA alums who are willing to help me accomplish these challenging tasks.

## **What's your favorite thing about UNA?**

I love the personal connections I have made and I never understood how rare these connections were until I started talking with other peers in Higher Education. While in college, my professors knew me by name and many ended up being references on my résumé.

I have also been a part of many projects that have come to life because our UNA faculty and staff are willing to do whatever it takes to benefit UNA. We all work together as a team and that makes for a great work environment.

## **What inspires you?**

I like to challenge myself and I love to learn new things. In my career, I have always pushed myself out of my comfort zone and I have never stopped trying to think outside of the box. I constantly find myself thinking, "I know there is a better way to do this."

## **Hobbies?**

Outside of work, I love to read, watch movies and spend time with my family. My family is the most important part of my life and I strive every day to be the best wife and mother I can possibly be. Some days I do better than others, but I would say I spend a good amount of time trying...

## **Favorite book?**

My favorite love story is: *The Edge of Never* by J.A. Redmerski.

My favorite historical fiction is: *Memoirs of a Geisha* by Arthur Golden.

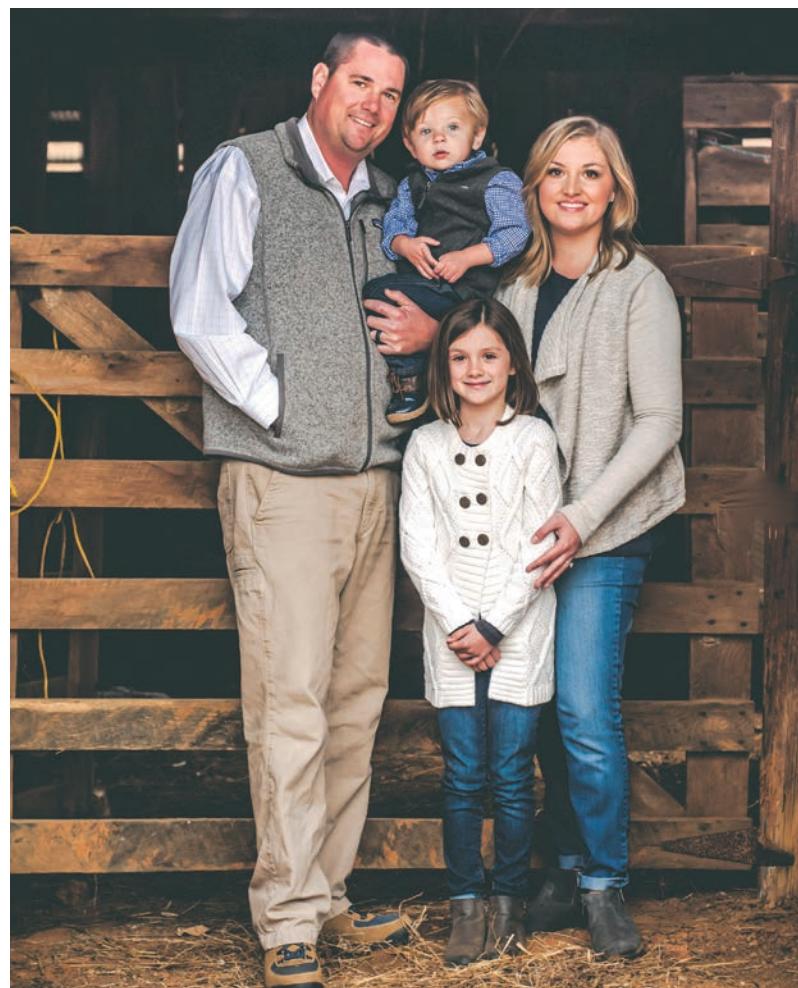
I also love anything written by Nora Roberts.

## **Favorite Movie?**

I love the movies "Grease" and "The Notebook." I have watched them both a million times.

## **Favorite food or drink?**

I am a true Southerner, because I love fried chicken and sweet tea. My grandmother was one of the best cooks and I grew up eating at her house every Sunday. Even though I have her recipes, I have yet to make anything as good as she did.



*Wes, Ryder, Madelyn, and Haley*



# CLASS NOTES

## YEARS UNIDENTIFIED

**Chip Lindsey**, who served as offensive coordinator and quarterback coach at Arizona State this past season and Southern Miss for two years prior, has been named the offensive coordinator and quarterback coach at Auburn. Lindsey was a member of the football team while attending the University of North Alabama and was a prep coach in Florence.

## 1960s

### Dr. Milton Sewell '66

President of Freed-Hardeman for almost two decades, was joined on stage by Laurel, his wife of more than 50 years, as this year's "Masters of the Bell." The Tolling of the Bell ceremony signals the start of each academic year, reuniting students, faculty, and the Freed-Hardeman family with those new to the school and those who shaped the private university's storied past. Serving as chancellor since 2008, Milton Sewell has been a part of the Henderson campus since 1962, when he graduated from what was then known as Freed Hardeman College. He also holds degrees from the University of Alabama, Harding College, and Florence State College.

## 1980s

**Clay Bennett '80** spoke on editorial cartooning at an Elder Scholars meeting in December 2016 at the University of Tennessee in Chattanooga. Bennett double majored in history and art.

**Keith Griffin '80** the Mohawks all-time winningest coach, has agreed to terms with the team to return for his ninth season in Amsterdam. During his tenure with the Mohawks, Griffin has won six league championships. Griffin is from Gadsden, and is a graduate of Livingston University. He holds a master's degree from the University of North Alabama.

**Rick Adams '82** presented Out of the Wood at the Kennedy-Douglass Center for the Arts. Out of the Wood is an exhibition of wood and ceramic sculpture. Adams is a Muscle Shoals native.

**Ronnie Garner '83** is a lifelong resident of the Shoals. A graduate of Deshler High School and the University of North Alabama, he is the owner of Garner Properties, LLC, and co-owner of Garner Autos, LLC. Garner has recently been elected to be one of eleven members of the First Metro Bank Board of Directors.

**Jerome Thompson '83** was recently voted Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree.

**Steve Richerson '84** threw himself into street performing in New York City two days after graduating with a degree in theater. He found his calling after a passerby threw litter at him in 1984 and demanded a magic trick from it. He now uses garbage in the majority of his act as Steve Trash and he recently performed at the Ohio State Fair.

**Harold Stitt '84** was recently interviewed for an article series about Vietnam veterans as the United States commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War. He served two tours in Vietnam as a Huey helicopter pilot. Stitt, who was inducted in the Madison County Military Hall of Heroes in 2016, served in the war from May 1967 through May 1968 and from June 1970 through June 1971. Harold Stitt was an ROTC instructor at the University of North Alabama from 1981-1983 and earned his Master of Business Administration degree from the University of North Alabama.

**Robert Cox '86** opened the 2017 exhibition season for the Alabama Center for the Arts with Around the Bend, an exhibition of drawings and paintings. According to a press release, Cox's work is inspired by the regional landscape of the Southeast and focuses on the biological and cultural heritage of our national forests and wilderness areas, wildlife refuges, and other public lands. Cox holds a degree in studio art.

**Dr. Carlos Nelson '96** was the guest speaker at the Unity Speaker and Concert event held by the Northwest-Shoals Community College. Nelson is the Deputy Superintendent of Sheffield City Schools. He has been in the field of education for 20 years. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Secondary Education Social Science, master's degree in Educational Leadership, and Educational Specialist degree in Educational Leadership.

**Steven Hamby '87** was appointed to Managing Director Government at

Cambridge Semantics based in Boston. In this newly created position, Hamby will serve Cambridge Semantics' federal government customers seeking insights from big data discovery, analysis, and data management solutions, such as the Anzo Smart Data Lake, to provide timely, accurate and customizable information to staff, citizens, media and businesses. He holds a bachelor's in management.

**Lisa Stooksberry '87** was appointed the new Deputy Executive Director by the National Assessment Governing Board. Stooksberry is a distinguished assessment expert and former educator who, working with the executive director and other staff, will support the Governing Board's congressional mandate to set policy for The Nation's Report Card, also known as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Stooksberry holds undergraduate and graduate degrees.

**Mark Narmore '88** received a degree in commercial music in 1988. He was awarded a bronze star for his musical achievements, which is on permanent display in the lobby of the Alabama Music Hall of Fame. His songs have appeared on seven gold or platinum albums. Mark has been a staff songwriter for FAME, Jody Williams Music, Reba McEntire's Starstruck Music Group, March Music, Sony ATV Tree, and currently for Noble Vision Music Group in Nashville. Mark has had 11 songs co-written with and recorded by Josh Turner.

**Dana Walker '88** is the Coordinator for the RN-BSN program at Mississippi University for Women. She graduates May 2017 with a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree from Samford University in Birmingham.

**Richard Henley '89** is the president of the Tupelo Elvis Fan Club. He is the 2016 president of the Northeast Board of Realtors and is the 2016-2017 treasurer of Mississippi Association of Realtors as well.

**Tammy McCaplin '89** works in accounting at Mitchell, McNutt & Sams Law firm in Tupelo, Miss. She is an active member at First Baptist Church in Saltillo, Miss. Tammy also is an avid golfer and loves to line dance with the Cedar Hill Steppers.

**Brad Montgomery '89** serves as University of West Alabama's head athletic trainer and joins his wife, UWA associate AD and senior women's administrator, Janet Montgomery, in the UWA Hall of Fame. Mark graduated with a bachelor's in physical education and biology.

## 1990s

**Barbara Peppers '91** was a graduate of Phil Campbell High School and attended Northwest Shoals Community College (then Northwest Jr. College) to earn her associate's degree. Afterward, she obtained her degree in education from the University of North Alabama. She taught third grade for 19 years and was a resource teacher for six more to total 25 years of teaching the children of her community at Phil Campbell

Elementary School. She was recently awarded with the Teacher of the Year award and is set to retire.

**Heather Wood '91** works as BancorpSouth Operations Center. She and her husband have three teenagers, four dogs, a cat, and two horses. She loves to exercise and travel.

**Sondra Blount '92** has been selected to join the Nursing Board at the American Health Council. Blount is a Staff Nurse at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville and she will be sharing her knowledge and expertise in the areas of Patient Care, Trauma, and Radiology. She received a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

**April Potter Holleman '95**, President of April Potter Agency, has announced that APA will be representing all Gospel, Christian, and Inspirational dates on Larry Gatlin and the Gatlin Brothers, who have been performing for audiences for more than 60 years. April Potter Agency is a full-service, exclusive booking and management company located just north of Nashville, Tenn., representing such artists as Crosby Lane, Gold City, Highland Park, MARK209 and others. Potter is a Franklin County, Alabama, native and a music business graduate. She currently resides in Nashville with her family.

**Anna Robinson '95** is the owner of GiGi's Cupcakes in Tupelo, Miss. She is married to Jon Robinson. They have four children and enjoy boating on Bay Springs Lake.

**Greg Seitz '95** is a Waynesboro, Tenn., native. He began his association with college athletics at UNA while working for sports information director Jeff Hodges. Seitz took a job at Jacksonville State in 1992 and eventually became the school's sports information director. After serving as an interim athletic director for 14 months, Seitz accepted the job as Jacksonville State Director of Athletics on a permanent basis in February 2016.

**Vonda Burroughs '96** has twin girls and a son: Cate, Claire, and Bo, and they are all musically gifted. Her husband Ken's band, Mississippi Stomp, was named the 2016 Mississippi's Rock Band of the Year.

**Pete Nelson '98** stepped out of his role as T-Rac, the Tennessee Titans mascot, in the summer of 2016. Nelson started his mascot career as Leo the Lion for UNA and he served five seasons. Nelson graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in communications and after UNA, served as the Titans' mascot from the beginning of T-Rac's unveiling.

**Jason Taylor '98** is the Data Communications Technician for BancorpSouth. He is married and has one son.

**Ricardo Rivas '99** was named as Principal and Chief Investment officer at Allied Orion Group. Allied Orion Group is a multifamily investment, construction, and property management firm. Rivas will be responsible for overseeing Allied Orion Group's multifamily investment business that includes

acquisition, development, and disposition of assets, as well as providing expert leadership and strategic vision as part of the executive team for the firm. Rivas graduated with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree. In 2000, he earned a Master of Business Administration.

## 2000s

**Gary Chandler '00**, President and Chief Operating Officer of the Alliance in the city of Corinth and Alcorn County, Miss., has accepted an offer from the Jackson County Economic Development Authority to become EDA president and CEO. Chandler is a native of Tupelo, Mississippi, and he holds a bachelor's in political science.

**Misty Williams '00** is the Director of Sales at Embassy Suites by Hilton Huntsville Hotel & Spa of John Q. Hammons Hotels & Resorts. With more than 13 years of hospitality experience, primarily in Huntsville, Williams will supervise the TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence Hall of Fame hotel's sales and marketing team. Williams graduated with a Bachelor of Science.

**Emilee Chappell '01** is the Director of Marketing for TOTO USA Inc., the world's largest plumbing manufacturer and the recognized leader in performance design and innovation. Emilee is responsible for marketing strategies, communications, and public relations activities for TOTO Americas. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Communications and has been with TOTO and



# CLASS NOTES

active in the kitchen and bath industry for over 10 years. She has served as both the Chair and a Board Representative for the NKBA KBIS Advisory Council.

**Chris Estave '01** was welcomed as Vice President and Mortgage Lending Officer at First Metro Bank. Estave is a Shoals native and graduate of Bradshaw High School who is deeply invested in the community.

**Jim Page '01**, the President and CEO of the West Alabama Chamber of Commerce, is the spokesperson for the Alliance for Alabama's Infrastructure (AAI), a coalition of groups promoting increased funding for improvements to Alabama's roads and bridges. Page graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science.

**Barbara Peeters '01** joins Team Sunweb as its new Chief Commercial Officer. In this position, Peeters will oversee the refinement and implementation of the team's sponsorship strategy and will be responsible to promote further development of commercial activities. Peeters graduated with a degree in public relations and during her time at UNA she played on the women's basketball team.

**Christy Jordan '02** published her third cookbook in the fall of 2016, "Sweetness." The name applies to her recipes and the sweet stories she tells from her childhood and about her family. Jordan graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Human Environmental Science, Merchandising.

**Arthur Martin III '02** serves as Deputy Director, Installation Support and Programs Management Directorate at the Engineering and Support Center in Huntsville. He was selected as one of the two individuals from the Corps of Engineers to participate in a very competitive senior executive program at Harvard University. Martin graduated with a Master of Business Administration.

**Jon Bret Smith '04** was recently elected as superintendent-elect of Lawrence County. Smith graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Education, a Master of Arts in Education in Mathematics Education, and an Education Specialist Degree with a certification in Educational Administration for P-12. Smith took office January 2017.

**Lauren Baker '04** was named Counsel to Dominick Feld Hyde. She graduated with a major in public communications and received her JD from Cumberland School of Law.

**Brett Trapp '05** released his first writing project during fall 2016, "Blue Babies Pink." In his blog, Trapp writes about his 15-year struggle of growing up gay in the Christian South. Trapp graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Professional Writing and a minor in Religion and Philosophy.

**Demond Garth '07** was transferred from Assistant Principal at Cedar Ridge Middle School to Interim Principal at West Decatur. He is a 1996 graduate of Austin High School and was former

head basketball coach at Austin until he moved back to Cedar Ridge four years ago. He received his Master of Arts in education from the University of North Alabama.

**Angela Howard '07** has twin daughters, two medical patents, and has a book being published in 2017.

**Cherie Sibley '08** has been named Chief Operating Officer of LifePoint Health at the Brentwood-based company's Central Group of hospitals. Sibley has been an employee of LifePoint Health since 2001 and in her new role will oversee operations for LifePoint hospitals in Indiana, Kentucky, Georgia, Mississippi and Tennessee. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing.

## 2010s

**Kevin Ledoux '12**, is the new coach of the Miami Dade College men's basketball team. Ledoux, a New Hampshire native, played college basketball at the University of North Alabama. He earned his degree in business management.

**William Shepherd '12**, a third-year student at the UA Little Rock Bowen School of Law, is clerking in the Civil Department. He graduated with a degree in business administration and marketing.

**Aaron Batchelder '14** was transferred from teacher to Assistant Principal of Brookhaven Middle School. Batchelder grew up in Texas and has worked in education 18 years. He spent the past nine years at Brookhaven and earned his specialist in

education degree from the University of North Alabama.

**Christopher McBride '15** has been named as Head Coach of the women's soccer team for Southeastern Louisiana University. After he graduated from Martin Methodist with his bachelor's in physical education and minor in biology, he went on to receive his master's from UNA in health and human performance. He served as an assistant coach for North Alabama for four years where he and the UNA goalkeepers recorded eight shutouts and averaged 0.75 goals in 2015.

**Adam McCollum '15**, Community and Sales manager at Sky Zone, graduated with a degree in business management. McCollum's main duty includes securing partnerships with schools and charities.

**Dacia Schell '15** and **Jennifer Thomas '15**, Belle Forest Elementary School teachers and UNA alumnae, began their teaching careers with Shelby County Schools January 2016. Both were hired following a teacher job fair in November that took place at the University of North Alabama.

**Kyle Stephenson ('15)** works at Nail McKinney Professional Association in Tupelo, Mississippi.

**Robert B. Calhoun ('16)** of Madison, has become affiliated with Crye-Leike's Madison branch office. Calhoun brings to Crye-Leike over 11 years of real estate appraisal experience with the Alabama Department of Revenue as a tax valuation analyst. There, he appraises

# ALUMNI PRIDE



Caroline Gray, Roy Gray, Mike Coston, Paula Coston '69, Joe Spalding, Luke Gray, Claire Gray, and Carol Lyles '70



Carol Lyles '70 and Amy Bishop '06



Shirley Self '60 and Nancy Sanford '78



Tyrie Fletcher '14, Elizabeth Tyson '15, Carol Lyles '70, Jordan Graham '14



Pat Burney '88, Carol Lyles '70, Judy Jackson '91, John Battcher '65, and Ann Battcher '65



## Alabama Writers Hall of Fame

**T.S. Stribling (1902)** was inducted into the Alabama Writers Hall of Fame. Stribling is a Pulitzer Prize winner and University of North Alabama alumnus; he is among a group of nine authors from around the state who were inducted on September 29 in Tuscaloosa. Thomas Sigismund Stribling was born in Clifton, Tenn.,

in 1881. He graduated from what is now the University of North Alabama in 1902 with a degree in education. Stribling won the Pulitzer Prize in 1934 for his novel, *The Store*, part of a trilogy set in Florence, Alabama. His short story, *Birthright*, was adapted for the screen as a silent film with sound added later.

all aspects of real property, including but not limited to, residential, commercial, vacant land, and waterfront. He is a certified Alabama appraiser (CAA) who holds a Master of Business Administration degree.

**Larry Darnell '16**, Director of Information Systems at the Florida Dental Association,

received his Master of Business Administration degree. Darnell completed his MBA degree online in two years while working full-time at the FDA. He graduated with a 4.0 GPA and is a member of Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society.



# IN MEMORY

## FACULTY AND STAFF

### Dr. Kenneth Ray Johnson

was born Dec. 10, 1927, in Covington County, Alabama. An Army vet, Dr. Johnson served nearly three years in Korea. He taught in public schools and later joined the faculty at the University of North Alabama in 1966, teaching several different history courses, becoming head of the department, and retiring in 1996 still holding the title of Professor Emeritus.

**Jason Eugene Flynn**, age 40, of Florence, passed away Tuesday, Oct. 18. Jason was born in Fayetteville, North Carolina, Sept. 1, 1976. Jason worked as an Associate Professor of Film & Digital Media Productions in the Communications Department at the University of North Alabama. He started the department in August 2008.

**Frank B. Mallonée**, passed away Dec. 7 in Needham, Massachusetts. Dr. Mallonée was born Jan. 4, 1931, in New Bedford, Massachusetts. He spent his entire career as a political science and history professor at the University of North Alabama. He received the University of North Alabama's Outstanding Service Award in 1984 for his high standards of academic excellence and his sense of intellectual honesty. His remarkable legacy in the classroom earned him the University's Lifetime Achievement Award.

**Dr. Marlon C. Rico, Jr.** passed away peacefully with his wife Beth by his side Jan. 30, 2017, in Gulfport, Mississippi. Marlon was an accomplished pilot with over 8,000 hours of flight time. Marlon retired from the

University of North Alabama as a Professor of Marketing.

### Jason Waycaster "J.J."

**Thomas**, age 44, died Saturday, Dec. 3, at North Mississippi Medical Center after a sudden illness. He was born Feb. 27, 1972, in Tupelo, Mississippi. Thomas was a Center Manager for ORBIS RPM in Columbus, and was a member of Harrisburg Baptist Church in Tupelo. He was a drum line instructor/arranger for UNA Pride of Dixie Band.

### YEARS UNIDENTIFIED

**Martha S. Taylor**, age 66, of Huntsville, passed away Jan. 23, 2017 at Crestwood Hospital. Martha was born on Aug. 14, 1950 and graduated from Sparkman High School before attending Florence State University. There she met her husband, Jerry Taylor to whom she was married for 45 years.

**Thomas Hendrix** passed away Friday, Feb. 24. Hedrix was born Feb. 14, 1943 in Tuscumbia. He graduated from Deshler High School and attended Florence State Teachers College. He served in the Army Reserve and was a resident of Tuscumbia at the time of his passing.

**Mr. Chesley David Clem, Jr.**, age 49, of Goodlettsville, Tennessee (formerly of Staunton, Va.), passed away December 1 after a battle with cancer. Mr. Clem was born April 11, 1967, in Staunton. He was a 1985 graduate of Marshall County High School in Benton, Ky. He attended the University of North Alabama and The Art Institute of Atlanta. He worked as a self-employed contractor in Staunton.

### Martha Olivia Moore Bryant

passed away peacefully at her home on the morning of Wednesday, Jan. 11. Martha attended Florence State Teachers College and while there, she majored in English Literature at Florence, sang in the school's Glee Club, was a member of Sigma Tau Delta Honorary English Fraternity, and she served as the president of the Women's Student Association.

**Melba H. McClellan**, age 84, of Matthews, passed from this life Aug. 18. Melba was born in Tuscumbia.

**Larry Pat Overton**, age 70, of Pensacola, Florida, died of natural causes Monday, Aug. 29. He was born Aug. 24, 1946, in Russellville. Pat married Brenda Johnson Sept. 23, 1978, in Sheffield, Ala. He was President of APWA Florida Chapter and a former Public Works Director in Escambia County. He proudly served in the U.S. Navy and was a veteran of Vietnam and Desert Storm.

**Ginger Llewellyn** of Bluewater Bay, Florida, died Aug. 12. She was born on Nov. 29, 1936, in Michie, Tennessee. She met her husband, Dave Llewellyn, while at UNA and they were married March 10, 1955. She and her husband Dave spent 30 years serving our country in the U.S. Army. In addition, she worked for the Federal Aviation Administration in the Human Resources Department.

**Dennis Allen Marlar**, age 62, died July 21 of natural causes in St. Petersburg, Florida. Mr. Marlar was a successful Chevrolet automobile dealer, auto resale dealer, a pilot, and he was in the real estate business for over 40 years. Born Aug. 5, 1953 in Paducah, Kentucky, Dennis grew up in Fayette. At age 19, Dennis Marlar became

the youngest Chevrolet Dealer in the U.S.

### Dewey Talbert ("D.T") Whitfield, Jr.

age 70, died Friday, Feb. 3, at his residence. He was born Jan. 16, 1947, in Booneville, Miss., to Dewey Whitfield, Sr., and Osene Johnson Whitfield. In his earlier years, he played basketball for Booneville High School, Northeast Mississippi Community College, and for the University of North Alabama.

### Scott Lyon Henninger

was born Sept. 15, 1927, and passed away on Sunday, Feb. 12. Scott was a resident of Tuscumbia at the time of his passing. He graduated from Deshler High School. Scott served in the United States Coast Guard.

**Edie Gregg Walden**, age 93, entered peacefully into rest Feb. 27, at her residence in Augusta, Ga. Mrs. Walden was born in 1923 and raised on a farm in Alabama. Prior to marriage, she taught school in Anniston. Mrs. Walden was a teacher and substitute for many years with Richmond County schools.

## 1940s

**Christine Counce '47** was born Mary Christine Daniel June 28, 1925, in Cherokee. Christine graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Florence State Teacher's College. She served as President of the Methodist South District of the United Methodist Women in the mid-'60s. She was Vice President of the Memphis Conference of the United Methodist Women in 1976 and 1977.

### Hettie Butler Terry '48

passed away peacefully on Sept. 5. She was 89 years of age. She was born in Lawrence County, Alabama and graduated from Hatton High School. She received

her bachelor's in elementary education and taught school for nine years. She served on numerous boards including the UNA Alumni Board, the UNA Foundation, and the Riverbend Center for Mental Health. She was also state president of the Alabama Medical Auxiliary and served on the state board of the American Cancer Society. Hettie was a member of the DAR, the Colonial Dames, and Phi Mu sorority.

## 1950s

**Pearl Nugent '51**, age 94, passed away of natural causes Nov. 21. Pearl was born June 11, 1922, at her family home in Anderson. She began her teaching career in 1943 at Anderson Elementary where she taught for 12 years while gaining her degree from Florence State Teachers College. In 1955, she transferred to Rogersville Elementary where she taught until she retired in 1976.

**Mary Jean Edgemon Potts '51** was born Aug. 19, 1927 to William Calvin Edgemon and Olive Elizabeth Pittman Edgemon in Venice, Florida. She died Aug. 27, in Houston, Texas.

**Nancy Ruth Redding '51** age 88, formerly of Greenhill, died Tuesday, Nov. 8 in Arlington, Texas. Ruth was born in Lauderdale County. Upon graduation, she began teaching in Lauderdale County Schools where she taught for 23 years.

**Elaine Hammond '52** was born in Lexington, April 14, 1921, and went to be with the Lord, Nov. 17. Turner was a long time principal and administrator with Orange County Public Schools.

**Naomi Sanford (Myers) Wilson '52** age 86, of Pell City, passed away on Nov. 20. Mrs. Wilson was a native of

Fayette. She taught school for many years in the Birmingham School System, with most of that time at North Roebuck Elementary and Smith Elementary Schools.

### **Lt. Colonel Elmon G. Terry Sr. '54**

Terry passed away peacefully at the age of 90 in Atlanta. Col. Terry was born in Decatur. He served in the Naval Air Corps during World War II. He also served in the Army during the Korean Conflict. After the wars, Col. Terry served with the Alabama National Guard and later as Commander of the 115 Signal Corp based out of Florence until his retirement in 1979. Col. Terry served in the Lauderdale County School System for 35 years, where he was principal of Underwood Elementary School. Terry served as UNA Alumni President and was actively involved with the Alumni Board and Athletic Clubs for several years.

### **Benjamin Forrest Law '55**

passed away Nov. 17 at his home, surrounded by his family. Ben was born in Scottsboro, Nov. 30, 1930. He joined the Army in 1951 and went to serve his country in Korea with the 151st Engineer Combat Battalion, Company B. After he returned and graduated from college, he married Susie Smith, and they started their family. In 1970, he started his own company, Delta Automotive.

### **Mary Larkins Holland '57**

died peacefully Sept. 5, at 90. Mrs. Holland was born in Charlotte, Tennessee. She married the love of her life, John W. Holland in 1946, and they lived in Florence on Lake Wilson for 45 years. Mary taught first grade at Powell School for 25 years after completing a bachelor's and master's degree in Early Childhood Education. She was a member of Delta Kappa Gamma Education honorary and was the Powell School

and Florence City Schools "Teacher of the Year" in 1986.

### **Christos "Chris" Cassimus '58**

age 80, of Huntsville, died Wednesday, Oct. 13. Chris was born June 13, 1936, in Decatur. He graduated in 1958 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration. Chris honorably served his country as a member of the U.S. Army from 1959-1961, where he obtained the rank of First Lieutenant. He graduated from the University of Oklahoma in 1971 with a Master of Arts in Public Administration. He retired from the U.S. Army Missile Command at Redstone Arsenal where he worked as Program/Budget Analyst.

### **Barbara Cooper Williams '58**

age 80, of Huntsville, passed away Nov. 25. Williams was born in Russellville. Upon graduation, She worked for the Federal Housing Administration. In the 1960s she went to work for the Army Rocket Guided Missile Agency for the chief scientist. In the late 1980s, she worked for Teledyne Brown Engineering, from which she retired in 1995.

## 1960s

### **Althea Warren Bonner '61**

age 93, of Lawrenceburg, Tennessee, passed away at Beverly Park Place in Knoxville, Monday, Nov. 7. Born Nov. 22, 1922, Althea taught math and science at Loretto and Lawrence County High Schools, retiring after twenty-five years.

### **Paul Gattis '62**

age 78, of Huntsville, passed away Aug. 15. Born in Huntsville to Rufus Woden Gattis and Flora Belle McGee Gattis, Mr. Gattis graduated from Butler High School in 1956. He received his bachelor's degree in business from Florence State Teachers College and his master's in Procurement from Florida Institute of Technology.

Mr. Gattis served in the Army National Guard and retired from Redstone Arsenal after 37 years – serving as Chief of Acquisition Management, Division of the Joint Attack Munitions Systems (JAMS) Office.

## **Delano Turner Densmore '62**

passed over peacefully at home on Aug. 20. Delano was born on Valentine's Day of 1937 in Joppa. He married his childhood friend Suzanne McKee in 1958; they were and married until her death in 2010. Delano graduated with a bachelor's in 1962 as well as a master's in mathematics in 1963. Delano started as a high school basketball coach and taught math for 30 years.

## **Marilyn Steele Becks '69**

age 69, of Sterrett, passed away Jan. 31. She was born Sept. 29, 1947, in Tallasseee. Marilyn was a loving wife for 47 years to Roger Becks. She earned her undergraduate degree in business and was a teacher and administrative assistant in many places across the Southeast.

## 1970s

**Marshall Bradford '70** age 69, passed away Oct. 18 of natural causes.. He graduated from Florence State College and from Advanced ROTC in 1970. He was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army. He continued additional training at the Airborne School. He served his country in Germany and Anniston, before receiving an honorable medical discharge. He worked as an environmentalist for the Department of Public Health in Colbert and Tuscaloosa Counties. He was a Master Mason, a member of the American Legion, and a lifetime member of the Disabled American Veterans.

**Terry Joe Counselman**

**'70** age 74, of Thomaston, died Oct. 29, at his home. He was born Jan. 15, 1942, in Mobile. He was a veteran of the US Army. He was also a retired teacher and former mayor of Thomaston.

**Mildred Louise Popwell Kirkland '70**

**Kirkland '70** was born Feb. 15, 1928, and passed away Saturday, Feb. 25. She married Mose Reed Kirkland in Birmingham. Mildred was an accountant from Thorsby and Reed was a Merchant Marine from Birmingham. Mildred, after having three children, graduated with a bachelor's degree in Secondary Education, English.

**Phillip Benford Logan**

**'70** was born Feb. 6, 1948. He was a long-time owner of Modulation, Inc., a local cabinet manufacturing company. He then owned and operated Logan Industries of Haleyville and was in sales at Southern Homes in Double Springs. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration. He also played football for UNA from 1966-1969. He served on the UNA Board of Trustees from 1990-2002 and was chairman for two terms.

**Frederick (Fred) William Merrill '70**

of Yazoo City passed away Wednesday, Nov. 30. Fred Merrill was born in Colon, Panama, Dec. 16, 1939. He graduated from the University of North Alabama with a bachelor's in English. Upon moving to Jackson, Miss., he established his career in the hospitality industry as manager of the Capital City Petroleum Club, serving as president of the Club Managers Association of America.

**Willa Marie Catherine Wirth Vial '70**

passed away Friday, Sept. 2. She was born in Downers Grove, Illinois, Jan. 4, 1925. Mrs. Vial was a career educator and started

her career as a kindergarten teacher. She was a founder of the Covenant Presbyterian Church Early Childhood Center in Huntsville. She was a leader in the Educational Improvement and Head Start Programs in Huntsville.

**James Patrick Henry**

**'72** died Saturday, July 30, surrounded by his family, in Asheville, North Carolina. He was born Jan. 18, 1950, in Decatur. He worked 40 years for the State of Alabama.

**Ellen Scott Goode '77**

was born Sept. 14, 1954, and passed away Wednesday, Feb. 8, 2017. She graduated from Bradshaw High School and then earned a degree in Education and Art. Ellen was a resident of Tuscumbia at the time of her passing.

**19 80s****Charles Wilson Leonard**

**'83** was born Jan. 12, 1931, in Mayfield, Kentucky. He joined the Air Force in 1949, and spent nearly four years of honorable service to his country. He went on to earn his Master of Arts in Counseling, and he continued to teach for several years.

**Donna Lee McWilliams Maier '83**

age 53, passed away peacefully at her home surrounded by her family Sunday, July 24, 2016. Donna was born in Sheffield. She received a bachelor's in management/marketing and was the senior financial analyst at Lake Charles Memorial Hospital. She worked there for 30 years.

**Angela Johnston**

**Dormagen '84**, of Huntsville, passed away Aug. 20, 2016 in Washington, D.C., of complications after a recent illness. She was 54 years old. Angela was born in Durham, North Carolina. She played basketball at the University of North Alabama,

where she graduated with a bachelor's in Marketing and Management Information Systems in 1984. She was a member of Phi Kappa Phi and held professional certifications from the Project Management Institute and APICS.

Angela was an Information Technology consultant and architect.

**Patricia Ann Vinson Shewbart '85**

age 81, passed away Feb. 16. She was born Nov. 22, 1935, in Franklin County and raised in the Halltown community until she married James Carl Shewbart, Sr., in 1952. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

**James Rankin Patterson**

**'86** age 54, of Sheffield, passed away Friday, Nov. 4. Randy was an Alabama native and a graduate of Mars Hill Bible School. He received a bachelor's degree from the University of North Alabama, and later received his master's degree. He worked as a nuclear chemist at TVA Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant.

**Carolyn Austin '87**

was born Jan. 13, 1943, and passed away Wednesday, Jan. 25. She graduated with a degree in management. She was a Graduate Student Counselor at the University of North Alabama. Carolyn was a resident of Tuscumbia at the time of her passing.

**Benjamin "Ben" Malone**

**West '87** age 57, of Birmingham, passed away Thursday, Oct. 20. Born and raised in Russellville, he served four years in the United States Air Force. Ben later moved to California to work for the Department of Defense as a chemist for the Navy.

**19 90s****Michael L. Hawkins '92**

age 53, passed away at his home in Tupelo Nov. 18.

He was born Dec. 5, 1962. Michael received his master's from the University of North Alabama. He taught high school and college math for several years.

**20 00s****Paul Michael Littlejohn**

**'02** age 39, died Thursday, Feb. 23, at Baptist Memorial Hospital North Mississippi in Oxford. He was born March 11, 1977, in Memphis. He was employed as a police officer for Blue Mountain, Walnut, Blue Springs, and Saltillo police departments. He was also a security guard with the Department of Homeland Security.

**Ben Phillips '04** had been a resident of Colorado for the last five years where he enjoyed an active outdoor life, including his passion for snow skiing.

**20 10s****D'Arcy "Dre" Coleman**

**'10** passed away from a rare form of cancer in March of 2015, only 10 days after his 28<sup>th</sup> birthday. Coleman was a defensive line coach for the Cleveland (Miss.) Wildcats.

**Barbara Ann Grimes Goswick '12**

age 64, of Mayflower died Saturday, Feb. 25. She was born Dec. 11, 1952. She obtained her Master of Business Administration and was a Certified Public Accountant. Her career in higher education spanned more than 35 years.

**Jared Matthew**

**Mothershed '13** age 27, of Muscle Shoals, passed away Oct. 29. Jared was born in Florence, Feb. 9, 1989. He received a Bachelor of Science in Education for Secondary Education and Social Sciences. After high school graduation, he attended Northwest Shoals

Community College where he played two years of college baseball and made Jr. College All-American his sophomore year. He played his last two years at UNA where he started at center field. Jared was married to Sara Knight Mothershed on April 7, 2012; they were married for four years, and had one child, Knight Jacob.

### Tiffany Ferguson '15

passed away Feb. 28. Tiffany was raised in Loretto, Tennessee, and was born May 11, 1993. She was a nurse at Saint Thomas West Hospital and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.



The University of North Alabama closed its 2016 football season by making the school's fifth all-time appearance in the NCAA Division II National Championship Game in Kansas City, Kan. While the Lions came out on the short end of a 29-3 score against Northwest Missouri State in a game that was played in sub-zero wind chill, 22 mile per hour winds and five inches of snow, UNA's 2016 season was one for the record books. North Alabama became the first school in Gulf South Conference history to win four straight GSC football championships and the Lions advanced to the NCAA Division II Playoffs for a record-tieing 21<sup>st</sup> time. UNA finished the year with an 11-2 record.

Senior quarterback Jacob Tucker finished third in the voting for the Harlon Hill Trophy for Division II National Player of the Year and senior offensive tackle Stephen Evans was a national finalist for the Gene Upshaw Award as the top lineman in Division II.



# SHOW YOUR LION PRIDE!

The UNA Alumni Association  
VISA® Card  
is the only card  
that rewards you  
while benefiting UNA.



Apply today at [www.una.edu/alumni/rewards](http://www.una.edu/alumni/rewards)



## ALUMNI INFORMATION UPDATE

Name (include maiden name if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Graduation Year(s) and Major(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home telephone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Business telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_

### I want to get involved with UNA alumni in my area...

- |   |                                       |  |                                    |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Club Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Homecoming   | <input type="checkbox"/> Alumni Committee Assignment | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Athletic Events        | <input type="checkbox"/> Board Member | <input type="checkbox"/> Recruit Students            | <input type="checkbox"/> Reunions  |

Have you won an award, changed jobs, earned a promotion or completed another degree? Your UNA classmates would like to know more about it! Send us your news and we will publish it in a subsequent issue of the *UNA Alumni Magazine*. Please complete the form and send it to the Office of Alumni Relations, UNA Box 5047, Florence, AL 35632-0001 or e-mail to [alumni1@una.edu](mailto:alumni1@una.edu).

Join OnLion at <http://alumni.una.edu>

## UPDATE YOUR RECORDS

# Tell them where you're from with a brand new UNA tag!

Not only are you showing your pride, but you're also helping students achieve success!  
Every time you purchase your UNA car tag, \$47.50\* of your \$50 fee  
will go directly to student scholarships.

## **EVERYBODY WINS!**



### ***Just how impactful is this?***

Money raised from the purchase of car tags allowed UNA to award **\$60K** in scholarships this year!

**YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE TODAY**

#Get It! #Scholarships #Make A Difference

\*tax deductible as per IRS regulations



OFFICE OF ALUMNI RELATIONS  
*University of* NORTH ALABAMA  
UNA Box 5047, Florence, AL 35632-0001

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
PRESORTED  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
UNIVERSITY OF  
NORTH ALABAMA



SATURDAY • MAY 6, 2017  
3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.  
COBY HALL LAWN